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4-H Family News

Mecosta County

NOVEMBER 2026

Find Your SPARK!

Our former SPIN (SPecial INterest) programs have a new name. They are now called 4-H SPARK programs.

These are one-time or multi session programs designed for you to SPARK your interest and explore new things. Check out page 4 of for upcoming Spark Programs.

SPARK programs are open to all youth. You do not need to be enrolled in 4-H to join – Bring a friend!

It's Enrollment Time!

All returning members/volunteers will need to register in 4-H Online by December 1st.

New members that plan to show at the 2027 fair have until April 1 to register.

The family enrollment guide can assist with enrollment. If you have any questions or run into any issues, please don't hesitate to reach out me.

We also offer paper enrollments if you choose you can fine them here or stop in our office to pick one up.



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COUNTY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday 11/21 ..... Big Rapids Festival of Lights Parade (4-H Float)

Monday 11/23 .....Crafty Clovers: Blow Paint Coasters 5:30pm

Thursday 11/26 ..... 4-H Council Turkey Trot 7am Elks Lodge Big Rapids

Monday 11/30 .....Crafty Clovers: Bird Feeders 5:30pm

Tuesday 12/1 ..... 4-H Online enrollment for returning members and Fair Entry (for steers) enrollment deadline

Saturday 12/5 ..... Dairy steer and beef steer weigh-in at fairgrounds

Saturday 12/5 ..... Introduction to Sewing (10am at MSUE office)

Monday 12/7 .....Crafty Clovers: Christmas Gnomes 5:30pm

Monday 12/14 ..... Crafty Clovers: Homemade Dog treats 5:30pm

Monday 1/25 ..... Jr. Fair Board education - 6pm at 4-H office
Topic: Early Swine Care and Nutrition
Jr. Fair Board meeting - 7pm at 4-H office

Monday 3/15 ..... Jr. Fair Board education - 6pm at 4-H office
Topic: to be determined (maybe goat/sheep related)
Jr. Fair Board meeting - 7pm at 4-H office

Thursday 4/1 ..... 4-H Online deadline to show at fair (new members)
Fair Entry for all youth showing at fair, swine feeder, sheep and goats must be entered

Monday 4/10 ..... Feeder, Sheep & Goat Weigh-in (9-11am Fairgrounds)

Monday 4/12 ..... Swine registration deadline

Monday 5/17 ..... Jr. Fair Board education - 6pm at 4-H office
Topic: to be determined
Jr. Fair Board meeting - 7pm at 4-H office

Tuesday 6/1 ..... Horse Record books deadline and Fair Entry Deadline for ALL Livestock and horses

Monday 6/28 ..... Pre-fair meeting 7pm Fairgrounds



Important Fair Deadlines!!

Tuesday December 1st

- All returning 4-H members must be enrolled in 4-H online.
- Anyone showing dairy or beef steers must be registered in Fair Entry

Tuesday April 1st

(if you are showing at the 2027 Fair)

- All new 4-H members must be enrolled in 4-H online if they are showing at the 2027 fair.
- All youth must be in the 2027 Fair Entry system
- Fair Entry registration deadline for swine feeders, sheep & goats

Mark Your Calendars!

MECOSTA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL FREE FAIR

July 11-18, 2027

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Spotlight, Shout Outs, and Thank Yous

A 4-H Legacy that lives on: In Memory of Venus Aris



For more than 40 years, Venus gave her time, talents, and heart to Mecosta County 4-H. As a dedicated 4-H leader and lifelong supporter, Venus helped shape experiences that brought young people together to learn, serve, grow, and give back to their community.

Venus truly lived the spirit of **Head, Heart, Hands, and Health**, and her influence reached far beyond her years as a leader. Today, that legacy can be seen in a very special way: her grandchildren continue to participate in 4-H through a club and program Venus herself helped shape.

Thank you, Venus, for believing in 4-H, for believing in young people, and for giving more than 40 years to strengthening our community. Your 4-H legacy lives on.

State Horse Show: Congratulation to Mecosta Delegates and finishers!!

Congratulations to the Mecosta County 4-H Horse Program members who qualified for and participated in the Michigan 4-H State Horse Show in August. Competing against outstanding 4-H youth from across Michigan, our exhibitors represented Mecosta County with skill, dedication, and sportsmanship.

All of our participants earned strong placings within their age divisions, with many achieving Top 5 finishes in their classes. Their success reflects the countless hours of practice, hard work, and commitment they invest in their horses and projects throughout the year.

We are proud of each exhibitor for their accomplishments and for representing Mecosta County 4-H so well on the state stage.

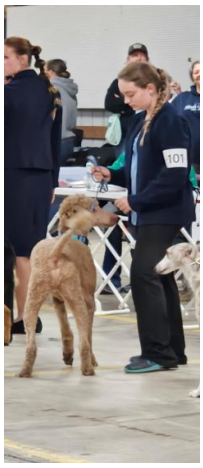
Qualifying members: Addison Battle, Emaly Coffin, Allison Cole, Ronny Creighton, Abby Doering, Kaleb Duchon, Kylee Heath, Landrie Prescott, Lilly Price, Mollie Samuels, Greta Schneider, Joelle Schneider and Summer Watz.

Reserve Grand Champions: Mollie Samuels & Joelle Schneider

Top 5 finishers: Kaleb Duchon, Landrie Prescott, Summer Watz

Congratulations on an outstanding State Horse Show experience! 🐴 🍀 💚

State 4-H Dog Show: Congratulations to Landrie and Rebel!



Landrie Szymanski and her dog Rebel represented the Mecosta County Paws and Pals Dog Club at the Michigan 4-H State Dog Show in September!

Competing in both Showmanship and Obedience, Landrie and Rebel achieved impressive results. The team earned 5th place in Intermediate Showmanship for their age division and 2nd place in Pre-Novice Obedience.

This was Landrie's second year as a member of Paws and Pals and her first time competing at the 4-H State Dog Show. Throughout the competition, Rebel remained calm, collected, and confident, he and Landrie demonstrated a strong partnership and dedication that the pair has developed through their hard work and training.

We are proud of Landrie and Rebel's accomplishments and look forward to seeing their continued success in the years ahead!



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COUNTY 4-H NEWS

Learn to Sew!

This introduction to sewing clinic will show you the basics of sewing!
We will be creating items you can give away as gifts of keep for yourself

Click here to register





Crafty Clovers 4-H Craft Classes: Christmas Edition!

Get into the holiday spirit and unleash your creativity! Join us to make unique gifts, festive decorations, and fun holiday crafts. Come to one session or join us for all of them

Click here to register



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES!!

- Prep candy for the Festival of Lights Parade
- Help build and walk in the Festival of Lights Parade
- Help us on Thanksgiving morning with the Turkey Trot
- Help with sewing program or craft classes

Contact Karen if interested: ripkekar@msu.edu



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COUNTY 4-H NEWS

Fair News & Updates

Key points from October 19th, 2026 Jr. Fairboard meeting

Congratulations to your 2026-27 Jr. Fairboard Officers!

Emma Bowman, Karlee Bowman Allison Cole and Saul Freiberg.

- **Swine** weights will now be 220-320. No overweight or roaster class. Over 320/under 220 will go back on the trailer and go home.
- **Sheep and goats:** Market animals take priority for barn space. If we have more animals than stall space, breed stock will trailer in for the show.
- **Cattle** rules update: Any horns must be under 2" and rounded or squared off. Same with any scurs.
- **June 1st deadline** for **ALL livestock and horse** classes to be entered into Fair Entry. Classes can be adjusted closer to fair with minor changes and approval of the superintendent.
- **Post-graduate requirements**: Project description & planned service hours must submitted by April 1st for approval. Hours/projects don't have to be completed by 4/1, but your plan needs to be approved by Jenn/Karen.
- For a specie to be shown at the fair, there will be a minimum requirement of no less than 3 families with no less than 5 total youth. Personalized prizes for species with low registrations will be ordered after the fair.
- The **dairy project** will be considered 1 of the 4 times through the sale ring.
- **Adding a beef and dairy/beef cross feeder class**. The rules for the beef/cross will be the same as the dairy. Max weight of 350 at April weigh-in and minimum weight of 350 at fair. They can also do non-market. Kids will only be allowed 1 market feeder just like they are allowed 1 market steer.
- **Beef weigh in date** is being changed to **December 5th** due to Winter Beef at MSU being the next weekend.





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TURKEY TROT 5K FUN RUN

FUNDRAISER

Mecosta County 4-H Council





- **Thanksgiving Day -November 26th, 2026**
- **$22 early registration* | $30 day-of registration**
- **Kids under 7 run free**
- **Elks Lodge, 203 E. Pine St., Big Rapids**
- **Registration starts at 7:00 AM | Run starts at 8:00 AM**
- **Winter beanie hats for the first 50 registrations****
- **All proceeds support the Mecosta County 4-H Programs and Scholarships.**

Scan to register

For more information: Karen Ripke | 231-592-0792 | ripkekar@msu.edu

Beyond Ready

**Eventbrite fees apply, total pre-registration cost $25.31*
***Beanie hats for the first 50 paid registrations*

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STATEWIDE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Preparing youth to be Beyond Ready: Developing a growth mindset through 4-H

Beyond Ready

Learning often comes through challenges, mistakes and trying something new. 4-H helps youth develop a growth mindset by encouraging them to persevere, reflect and continue improving their skills over time.

Volunteers can reinforce this by celebrating effort, encouraging problem solving, and helping youth view setbacks as opportunities to learn. When young people learn that success comes from persistence and practice, they gain confidence to tackle future challenges. These experiences help youth become more resilient and better prepared for life beyond 4-H.

#BeyondReady

November 17: Online Guiding Principles for Highly Successful Parenting Webinar Series
Online
Explore ways to be highly effective in raising kids to be successful in school and in life with this free online series. Parents of kids from toddlers to teens will explore: developing family routines, developing emotional control in your child, being a calm assertive parent, developing consistent rules and relationships, learning from mistakes, developing empathy and the ability to be thankful.
www.canr.msu.edu/events/guiding-principles-for-highly-successful-parenting-webinar-series-nov-dec-2026

November 19: 4-H Volunteer Webinar Series – Growing Money Skills through 4-H
Online
Financial skills are life skills—and they're skills youth can start growing today. Join this webinar to discover easy, engaging ways to plant financial education into your 4-H club meetings, activities and events. Participants will leave with hands-on activities, discussion starters and ready-to-use resources that help youth build money management skills while having fun. Thanks to the support of MSUFCU, randomly selected attendees will receive a free financial education resource for their clubs.
www.canr.msu.edu/events/michigan-4-h-volunteer-webinar-growing-money-skills-through-4-h

November 27 – December 13: Fall TSC Paper Clover Campaign
Tractor Supply Co. stores statewide
Embrace the holiday spirit and purchase a paper clover at Tractor Supply Co. (TSC)! The Paper Clover campaign will officially launch on Black Friday; support 4-H youth both online or in TSC stores for just $1!
www.canr.msu.edu/events/tractor-supply-co-paper-clover-campaign



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STATEWIDE 4-H NEWS



Support 4-H with the TSC Paper Clover Campaign

From Nov. 27 – Dec. 13, Tractor Supply Company (TSC) customers across the nation will have the opportunity to support 4-H youth by purchasing a $1 clover at checkouts when shopping both in stores or online at www.TractorSupply.com. Funds raised will support county, state and national 4-H programming. To learn more, visit www.tractorsupply.com/tsc/cms/4h.

You can also support 4-H by purchasing three special commemorative 4-H holiday ornaments (a beef cow, lamb and dog), now in TSC stores! Proceeds from the sale of ornaments support 4-H.

Michigan 4-H Foundation launches Beyond Ready Campaign to prepare youth for the future



At the Michigan 4-H Legacy Awards Celebration on Saturday, October 3, the Michigan 4-H Foundation announced the public launch of the Michigan 4-H Beyond Ready Campaign, a bold fundraising initiative with a goal of raising $12 million by 2032 to help prepare Michigan youth for the future.

"Today's youth face a rapidly changing world that requires resilience, adaptability and confidence," said Mary Draves, co-chair of the Michigan 4-H Foundation's Beyond Ready Campaign Committee. "Michigan 4-H is uniquely equipped to support youth in developing these critical skills and more. The Beyond Ready Campaign will provide long-term, stable funding that allows Michigan 4-H to continue offering opportunities and experiences that prepare young people to face challenges and thrive, no matter what the future may bring."

Research consistently demonstrates the positive impact of 4-H participation. Young people involved in 4-H are more likely to develop leadership skills, contribute to their communities and gain confidence in their ability to succeed. The Michigan 4-H Beyond Ready campaign will help ensure future generations of Michigan youth can experience these same benefits by investing in the programs, people and possibilities that bring 4-H to life.

The campaign focuses on five priority areas: **4-H educational opportunities and skills development**; **Michigan 4-H Children's Gardens**; **health, well-being and belonging; emerging needs**; and **endowment investments**, including **county endowments** for localized impact. The campaign also includes a **planned giving goal of securing 40 planned gifts by 2032**, helping to create a lasting legacy of support for Michigan 4- H.

"Today's young people will soon lead our communities, workforce and future," said Joe Hune, Michigan 4-H Foundation trustee and co-chair of the Beyond Ready Campaign Committee. "This campaign will ensure Michigan 4-H can continue to provide life-changing experiences, deliver innovative programs, support diverse learning needs, and help youth from all communities across Michigan become Beyond Ready for future success through 4-H."

The Oct. 3 public launch builds on strong momentum from the campaign's leadership phase. Already $7.3 million, nearly 62% of the $12 million goal, has been raised through more than 5,200 gifts from nearly 2,200 donors. Michigan 4-H alumni, volunteers, families, partners and friends are invited to join the effort to help build a generation that is Beyond Ready through Michigan 4-H.

Every gift to the Beyond Ready Campaign is an investment in Michigan youth and their future. There are many ways to participate, including one-time gifts, multi-year commitments, IRA gifts and qualified charitable distributions (QCDs), gifts of stock, planned/estate gifts, or donations of property, grain or other assets. Together, these investments will help expand opportunities, build confidence, spark curiosity and prepare more Michigan youth to be beyond ready for life, leadership and success.

To learn more about the campaign or make a gift to invest in the future of Michigan 4-H, visit www.mi4hfdtn.org/beyondready.