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SEPTEMBER 2026

# 4-H Family News

## Mecosta County

Beyond Ready

I hope everyone had a wonderful summer I wish all our youth an amazing school year!

It's time to get Beyond Ready for Mecosta County 4-H!

Enrollment for the 2026-27 program year is now open.




To keep you in the know of all things 4-H and Mecosta County Fair, you will be receiving bi-weekly newsletters that will include;

- Deadline reminders
- Important dates for meetings and events
- Regional and State 4-H activities
- Contests and scholarships
- Shout outs to our youth that are doing great things
- Volunteer and club leader information

**It's a new 4-H program year!**

Please login to your family's 4-H Online (mi.4honline.com/) account and enroll your 4-H members for the 2026-2027 program year.

All returning families should use the same email address to access their account as they have in the past.

If you do not remember your login email, do not create a new account, simply contact your Karen (ripkekar@msu.edu) for assistance. Thanks for being a part of the 4-H community!




## CONTACT US

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# STATEWIDE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## *Starting the new 4-H year with a focus on being Beyond Ready*

Beyond Ready

A new 4-H year is the perfect time for volunteers and youth to set the tone for growth, learning and readiness. Beginning the year with intentional activities helps young people build confidence, explore their interests, and understand how their 4-H experiences prepare them for life beyond the club.

Early goal setting, reflection and hands-on project work encourage youth to practice important skills such as communication, decision making and responsibility. Volunteers play a key role by helping youth make connections between what they do in 4-H and the skills they will need in future school, work and community settings.

By starting strong and reinforcing these ideas all year long, clubs can help ensure youth are truly Beyond Ready for whatever comes next.

#BeyondReady

**September 23: Adulting 101 – Are You Ready?** *(Online)*
Get ready for anything! This workshop will teach youth how to stay calm, make a plan and handle emergencies with confidence and safety.
www.canr.msu.edu/events/adulting-101-2026

**October 4-10: National 4-H Week**
For more than 100 years, 4-H has inspired families, shaped careers, and impacted communities. Celebrate 4-H during National 4-H Week! Learn more: https://www.canr.msu.edu/events/national-4-h-week

**October 5: Go Green for 4-H!**
On Monday of National 4-H Week, Go GREEN and show your 4-H spirit! Wear a green hat, clothing, face paint— anything green goes. Let's paint the nation GREEN in support of 4-H!
www.canr.msu.edu/events/national-4-h-week




Animal science meets fall fun!
Join Michigan 4-H for the all-new 4-H Animal Science Fall Fest on October 31. Designed by teens, for teens, this program is packed with hands-on sessions, career exploration opportunities, fall fun, and more! Registration is now open and will close on October 15th. You can find the full details here: https://www.canr.msu.edu/events/4-h-animal-science-fall-fest-2026

**Starting in October, the Wild Spartans Series is back!**




Join 4-H staff as they take a look into life working with fisheries and wildlife! Follow along to climb through bogs, peer into bear dens, mist net songbirds, snorkel for fish, or perhaps even tag deer. Meet natural resources professionals, learn about their field work, and the education and career path they've followed to get there.

Monthly sessions held on the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Each 30-minute session will feature 1-2 guest speakers. Youth will be encouraged to ask questions to learn more through a live Q&A with scientists. This free virtual series is open to 4-H and non-4-H youth ages 12-19 years. Pre-registration required: www.canr.msu.edu/environmental_outdoor_education/wild-spartans-series.



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# COUNTY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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| Monday 9/21 ..... | Conservation program - 5pm FSU |
| Monday 9/21 ..... | Jr. Fair Board meeting - 7pm at fairgrounds |
| Monday 9/28 ..... | Conservation program - 5pm FSU |
| Wednesday 9/30..... | Cloverbud program starts - 6pm at 4-H office |
| Monday 10/12 ..... | Jr. Fair Board officer applications due |
| Saturday 10/3 ..... | Fall leader update – 10am at 4-H office |
| Monday 10/19 ..... | Jr. Fair Board education - 6pm at 4-H office<br>Jr. Fair Board meeting - 7pm at 4-H office |
| Saturday 10/31 ..... | Fall Fest @ MSU |
| Monday 11/2 ..... | Craft SPIN Starts 5:30pm at 4-H office |
| Saturday 11/21 ..... | Big Rapids Festival of Lights Parade |
| Thursday 11/26 ..... | 4-H Council Turkey Trot 7am Elks Lodge Big Rapids |
| Tuesday 12/1 ..... | 4-H Online enrollment for returning members and Fair Entry (for steers) enrollment deadline |
| Saturday 12/12 ..... | Dairy steer and beef steer weigh-in at fairgrounds |
| Monday 3/15 ..... | Jr. Fair Board education - 6pm at 4-H office<br>Jr. Fair Board meeting - 7pm at 4-H office |
| Thursday 4/1 ..... | 4-H Online deadline to show at fair (new members)<br>Fair Entry for all youth showing at fair, swine feeder, sheep and goats must be entered |
| Monday 4/12 ..... | Swine registration deadline |
| Monday 5/17 ..... | Jr. Fair Board education - 6pm at 4-H office<br>Jr. Fair Board meeting - 7pm at 4-H office |
| Tuesday 6/1 ..... | Horse Record books deadline |
| 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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# COUNTY 4-H NEWS

## Watersheds & Conservation SPIN (SPecial INterest) Club is off to a great start!



Monday nights are all about learning, exploring, and discovering the world around us through conservation!

In partnership with Ferris State University's Card/Riley Wildlife Education Center, the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, and the Mecosta Conservation District, we are offering **Dive into Discovery: Watersheds & Conservation** for youth ages 8 and older.

During our first session, participants learned what a watershed is and explored how water moves through our community. Upcoming sessions will dive into river and waterway health, river conservation, weather, invasive species, and the impact agriculture waters.

There is still time to join us! This hands-on program is a great opportunity for youth to learn about the natural resources that make our region unique. For more information or to register, contact **Karen Ripke** at **ripkekar@msu.edu** or text **231-598-1036**.

We hope to see you on Monday night as we continue our journey of discovery!

## Cloverbud program starts September 30th

The 4-H Cloverbud Program is a fun, hands-on educational experience specially designed for youth ages 5 through 7. Cloverbuds participate in engaging activities that build self-confidence, encourage healthy lifestyles, develop social skills, and introduce young learners to the exciting world of 4-H.

Our program meets **6 weeks in the fall and 6 weeks in the spring**. Each session offers a new learning experience, allowing youth to explore a variety of 4-H project areas through age-appropriate, hands-on activities.

The goal of the Cloverbud Program is to provide a variety of **quality, positive, and safe learning opportunities** that foster curiosity, friendship, and personal growth. Through fun, age-appropriate experiences, youth begin building the confidence and skills that will help them succeed throughout their 4-H journey.

**Come learn, create, explore, and grow with 4-H Cloverbuds!**







## Shout Outs and Birthdays

Beginning in January 2027, we will no longer be mailing birthday cards to our 4-H members. Instead, we will celebrate birthdays through this newsletter by recognizing members each month.

While birthdays are certainly worth celebrating, we also know that our 4-H members are accomplishing amazing things every day. Whether it's an achievement in school, sports, community service, leadership, academics, the arts, or within 4-H, we'd love to help share and celebrate those successes.

If your 4-H member has something they are proud of, please send the information to Karen. We would love the opportunity to give them a shout-out and showcase their hard work, talents, and accomplishments both within and beyond 4-H. Let's celebrate the many ways our youth are making a positive impact in their communities!

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# 4-H Social Media Sites to check out

**Michigan 4-H Animal Science Facebook page**

This page is your one-stop shop for all things related to your animal science projects, so follow along so you don't miss anything!




Can you think of someone who has displayed amazing sportsmanship this year? Perhaps at a club meeting, clinic, or the county fair? Nominate them for the 2026 Michigan 4-H Animal Science Sportsperson of the Year Award!

This award recognizes one youth member and one adult 4-H leader who demonstrates the definition of sportsmanship going above and beyond to lend a helping hand during animal science programs. Nominations are due October 15. More details: , https://www.canr.msu.edu/reso.../competitive_event_resources

# Volunteer Corner




Fall is a great time to learn, connect, and grow as a 4-H volunteer! Join us for a Michigan 4-H Volunteer Webinar in 2026! Whether you're new to volunteering or have years of experience, these webinars offer practical tips and fresh ideas to help you make an even greater impact. View topics and register: https://www.canr.msu.edu/.../mi-4-h-volunteer-webinar-series. We look forward to learning with you online!

**9/22/26: How to have a Beyond Ready 4-H Club:**
Strong clubs don't happen by accident. This webinar to explore practical strategies for creating a Beyond Ready 4-H club where every young person can thrive. You'll leave with ideas and resources to intentionally design club experiences that foster positive youth development and prepare young people with the skills they need for success in school, work, and life.

**10/27/2026: Infusing Positive Youth Development into your Club**
Explore simple strategies that foster belonging, build developmental relationships, encourage youth voice, and create engaging experiences where young people can develop confidence, competence, character, and caring.

**11/19/2026: Growing Money Skills through 4-H**
Financial skills are life skills—and they're skills youth can start growing today. Discover easy, engaging ways to plant financial education into your 4-H club meetings, activities, and events. Leave with hands-on activities, discussion starters, and ready-to-use resources that help youth build money management skills while having fun.