



READY, SET, GROW!

Illinois 4-H'ers are beyond ready
to succeed and thrive in
tomorrow's workforce



2024

CLOVERSEED

Illinois 4-H
2023-2024
Annual Report



Illinois 4-H
FOUNDATION



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

A recent Replication and Reconnection Study confirms the original, powerful outcomes of the Tufts 10-year study of 4-H outcomes: 4-H helps youth thrive, now and into adulthood.

Compared to their peers, 4-H participants are:

- 4X more likely to make a positive contribution to their communities
- 2X more likely to participate in out-of-school-time science programs
- 2X more likely to make healthier choices
- 2X more likely to report feeling competent
- 2X more likely to feel positive about their wellbeing

4-H alumni are:

- 3X more likely to participate in community service
- 2X more likely to report living life with intentionality and purpose
- 2X more likely to have the goal of being a leader

Photo by: Mackenzie Goff, 4-H Influencer

Hands-on experiences. Really confident kids.



#ThisIs4H

University of Illinois Extension is housed within the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Dr. Shelly Nickols-Richardson, Director of University of Illinois Extension. Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

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Hello 4-H Community,

We are delighted to share this summary of Illinois 4-H highlights from the past year. As you read the stories, we hope you will see that 4-H has something for every

young person. We are constantly reviewing and innovating to provide experiences that will prepare youth for post-high school success. Our mission remains to help youth be ready for work and ready for life. And more than ready for tomorrow – we help young people prepare to navigate the changes ahead that we can't yet predict. We know that 4-H youth are ready to be leaders, ready to build, ready to adapt and 4x more likely to contribute to their communities.

We hope you share our pride in the accomplishments of Illinois 4-H youth. Whether you are a current 4-H member, family member, volunteer, donor, partner or alum – you are an important part of the 4-H story. We know that 4-H is more than a program – it is a network and community for life. This network of support for Illinois youth is a collective effort and we thank you for the unique ways in which you contribute to the mission.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lisa Diaz
Assistant Dean and Illinois 4-H Director



As you'll see in this issue, 4-H experiences are designed to nurture resilience, creativity, and leadership—qualities that are essential for success in today's

dynamic world.

As you browse through the pages of this issue, you'll discover the incredible achievements of our 4-H youth along with inspiring stories of 4-H'ers who have transformed their passions into skills that will help them be ready to be successful in work and life. From hands-on projects to community service initiatives, these young individuals exemplify the essence of readiness and the spirit of 4-H. Your support has been instrumental in making these opportunities possible, and for that, we are deeply grateful.

Thank you for your continued commitment to empowering the next generation. Together, we are planting the seeds for a brighter future, one that is filled with capable, confident, and compassionate leaders.

Warm regards,

Angie Barnard
4-H Foundation Executive Director



Help create more opportunities for Illinois youth

The Illinois 4-H Foundation Board of Directors is always looking for passionate and enthusiastic individuals to help build relationships to generate financial resources for Illinois 4-H.

WITH YOUR HELP – WE CAN DO MORE!

If you are interested in serving, please scan the code below or head to go.illinois.edu/4HBoard to fill out the interest form.



Illinois 4-H Foundation Board of Directors

Those who serve on the Illinois 4-H Foundation Board of Directors do so because they believe in what 4-H is teaching and want to build networks that generate financial resources for our state program. We give our thanks to you for your time, advocacy, and support of the Illinois 4-H program.

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Jana Lithgow, Ohio
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Dr. Shelly Nickols-Richardson
Dr. Lisa Bouillion-Diaz
Kimberly Bishop
Tina Veal

Illinois 4-H provides #Opportunity4All

Illinois 4-H continues to advance its commitment to provide opportunity for all youth in Illinois.

Last year, Illinois 4-H had...

Total number of BIPOC* youth:

19,705

Minority reach: **23%**

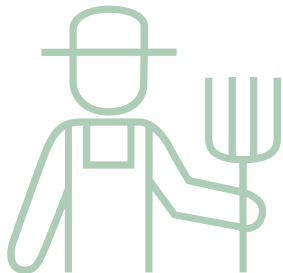
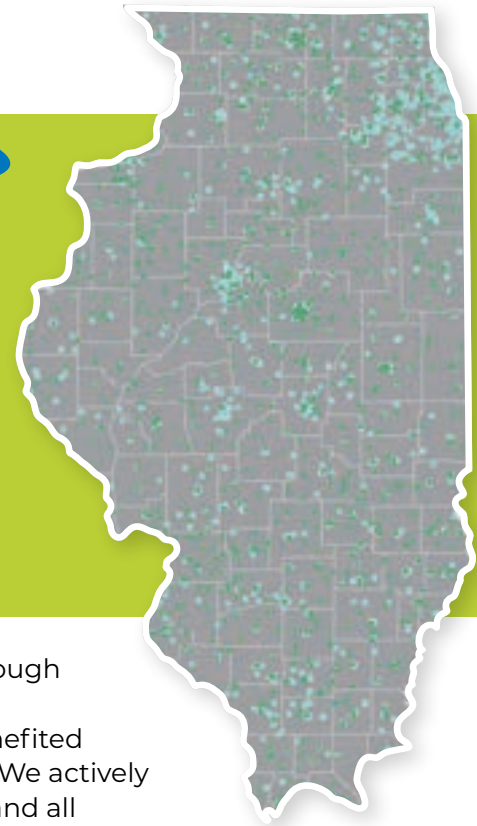
Minority youth served in education programs: **27%**

Hispanic youth percentage reach overall: **10%**

Black youth percentage reach overall: **7%**

*BIPOC is an acronym for Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

4-H has clubs and experiences in all 102 counties in Illinois!



4-H actively creates new opportunities through clubs and programs that reach youth and communities who haven't traditionally benefited from 4-H or participated in 4-H programs. We actively work to remove barriers for youth of color and all youth throughout Illinois.



Our footprint 2023-2024

Illinois 4-H provides extensive structures of support for youth to follow their spark, build skills, challenge themselves to achieve goals, and expand their network at local, state and national levels. These experiences set youth on a pathway of positive youth development so that they can thrive.

132,711

youth

24% growth from last year



260,321

experiences

31% growth from last year



1,840 clubs

570 cloverbud clubs

Over **112** leadership-focused clubs

4,798 programs reached over

112,372 youth

up **29%** from last year

These programs address health and other challenges facing our IL communities.

In 4-H, we believe...

all youth, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, faith, orientation, interests, or abilities deserve a place where they can thrive and achieve a better future. Illinois 4-H is committed to eliminating any instance of discrimination or inequity within our program to support opportunity for all youth.

In 2023-2024, donors just like you helped youth gain confidence, leadership, and new connections!

FOUNDATION HIGHLIGHTS



\$830,696

Total dollars given to the
Illinois 4-H Foundation
7/1/23 – 6/30/24



1,859
donors



82

endowments
valued over

\$17M

with an annual
interest of

\$331,977



4-H for our Future Fund

While every gift makes an impact, placing your trust in us to allow funds to go where the need is greatest helps 4-H do more.

This type of gift designation allows flexibility and the ability to quickly provide
what youth need, when they need it.

Why has 4-H survived and thrived for over 100 years? Look no further than the BIG-M!

Belong
Independence
Generosity
Mastery



Today's new
friends are
tomorrow's
lifelong
network

National experiences through 4-H foster independence by providing youth with opportunities to engage with leaders and communities across the country, building their confidence and civic awareness.



Creating an Endowment provides everlasting support for 4-H

You can create an endowment to provide support in perpetuity for a 4-H initiative or county 4-H program with a minimum gift of \$25,000. Contact the Illinois 4-H Foundation so they can help you create a lasting legacy that will detail your wishes and ensure your intentions can be carried out to support a specific 4-H program or area of your choosing.



To learn more contact illinois4hfoundation@illinois.edu or 217-333-9295.

With your help, the 4-H Foundation helps make more happen!

Travel to this national experience was made possible by the generosity of Illinois 4-H donors.





Part of leading is serving! Junior Leadership Conference attendees worked together to package 12,744 meals to take back and donate in their home communities after the conference ended.

4-H is preparing youth for post high school success

Throughout this issue you'll see youth that are beyond ready for tomorrow's workforce. Illinois 4-H is helping today's youth by:

- ✓ Enhancing leadership
- ✓ Instilling healthy choices
- ✓ Developing workforce skills
- ✓ Building engagement strategies
- ✓ Inspiring innovation
- ✓ Expanding food access
- ✓ Stewarding environmental issues
- ✓ Producing safe food and more!

Through 4-H clubs, programs, and camps, youth have many paths to learning so they can master the skills they need for the future.



Learn more about IRA Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)

As of January 1, 2023, the IRS requires individuals to begin taking required minimum distributions (RMDs) from qualified retirement accounts, including traditional IRAs, when they reach age 73. However, if someone turns 72 in 2022 and delays their first RMD until April 1, 2023, they must take their 2022 RMD by that date and their 2023 RMD by December 31, 2023. For those who turn 74 after December 31, 2032, the RMD age will be 75.

Failing to withdraw RMDs may result in a penalty, such as a 25% excise tax. One option for RMDs is a qualified charitable distribution (QCD), which may be especially appealing to those who want to support Illinois 4-H. Another option is to consider the impact of not including the RMD in gross income on other items, such as taxable Social Security, Medicare premiums, and deductible medical expenses.

Illinois does not tax the federally taxed portion of retirement income received from IRAs, 401(k) plans, and other qualified employee benefit plans.

WHY I GIVE with Donna Mueller of Knox County



For Donna Mueller, giving to 4-H is personal. Growing up on a rural farm in the 1950s and 60s, she didn't have many opportunities to travel or experience different activities. 4-H became a significant part of her life, offering valuable life skills that she still uses today. "My mother was a 4-H leader for 50 years, so there wasn't much choice—I was going to be involved. But I wanted to be," Donna recalls. Whether it was cooking, baking, or public speaking, 4-H taught her lessons that shaped her career and life. "The skills I learned in 4-H food demonstrations and events influenced my career as a dietitian."

Donna has witnessed the growth of 4-H over the years, evolving to a program that offers a wide range of opportunities for all youth. "I've seen 4-H grow and change, and I like that more and more people can benefit from it. Now there's a world of options," she says.

Donna chooses to give through her IRA Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). As she approached the age when she was required to withdraw money from her retirement account, she realized she didn't need all of it as additional income—especially with the taxes it would bring. That's when she discovered she could direct her RMD to the Illinois 4-H Foundation. By doing so, it not only counted as her required distribution but also allowed her to avoid paying taxes on it. This simple and effective method has made her annual donation easy to manage, and she appreciates the flexibility it offers, allowing her to choose different areas of support each year.

One of her most rewarding experiences has been attending the annual scholarship banquet, where she meets the recipients and sees firsthand how her contributions are making a difference. "It's such a wonderful experience to sit at the table with the scholarship winners, hear their goals, and see where they're headed. You really get to see your money in action."

Donna encourages others to consider investing in 4-H, especially those who have been positively impacted by the program. "4-H helps youth in constructive ways, exposing them to different career paths and giving them hands-on experience before they pursue higher education. It's a great way to help kids make informed choices about their futures."

Her message to potential donors is simple: "If you've been in 4-H or seen its impact, it's worth investing in. The program is more than just cooking, sewing, or livestock—it's about helping youth discover their passions and develop into tomorrow's leaders."

Meet Avani!

2024 Youth in Action Pillar Winner

Persuaded to join a public speaking project at 10 years old, Avani Rai of McLean County describes the experience as feeling like her world was about to end. In reality, it had just begun. Through 4-H, Avani found her spark in using her voice and never looked back. This passion for public speaking transformed into mentoring a robotics club, leadership as a McLean County 4-H Teen Teacher and advocacy as a Healthy Living Ambassador. Through these experiences Avani developed the exceptional interpersonal and communication skills needed to pursue her passion of improving healthy living by addressing food insecurity and mental health for her neighbors.

Witnessing the shortcomings of addressing food insecurity in her community at a young age, Avani became an integral part of 4-H's Food Advocacy Team, a youth-led initiative to improve equitable access to healthy foods and champion food security. Avani and the team organized healthy food drives, meal packaging events and educated others through community seminars. Most significantly, the team supported 30 youth-led food justice projects across Illinois, providing the youth teams with \$23,000 of grant funding to sustain their ambitions. For her work with food advocacy, Avani was invited to speak and represent 4-H as a 'Young Changemaker' at the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health alongside Ambassador Susan Rice and

Second Gentleman Douglas Emhoff.

Later, Avani expanded her service to overall healthy living, including mental and physical health through yoga. Equipped with her Teen Teachers training, Avani launched her 'SuperYoga' curriculum for elementary students. Avani led collaborations with local organizations and student leadership groups to create, plan, organize and implement day-long sessions for local elementary students. Reaching three elementary schools in her district, Avani's curriculum has impacted more than 1,300 children. Avani served as the sole youth representative on the Illinois Department of Agriculture's USDA-sponsored Local Food Purchase committee, giving her an opportunity to address food insecurity through public policy and legislation. Avani dreams of a bright future—enacting social change as a legislator in Congress. Armed with experience and optimism, her journey of advocating for healthy living has just begun. Avani is currently an undergraduate at Harvard and continues to represent Illinois 4-H on the national stage as she closes out her Youth in Action year.



Multiplying Good Jefferson Award Winner

Disha Rai of McLean County was selected as a winner of the Nickelodeon Our World Award in collaboration with the Jefferson Awards, a program of Multiplying Good.

Nickelodeon Our World empowers kids to find their sense of agency through resources and opportunities to upskill themselves. Disha was chosen because the work she was doing exemplifies the power of kids!



“I have been volunteering and working in my community since I was 4 years old. It’s always been a big part of who I am and always will be. I love to help others and I want to keep having a positive impact. I am thankful to 4-H for opening doors for me and providing me with the skills and opportunities to make a difference.” **Disha Rai**



Three out of the four members of the Urban Adventurers from Cook County received a Bronze Jefferson Award for Leadership in Community Service. Shawn Hibbard, Dylan Hibbard, and Isabella Roth were chosen for their service in planning and implementing a food forest for the children’s garden at Proksa Park.



“Their thirst for new livestock knowledge is incredible and they not only seek out skills, but then make it their job to teach their teammates”

Coach **Eric Fugate**

Illinois 4-H is breaking records at NAILE!

For the first time ever, Illinois 4-H won the National 4-H Quiz Bowl AND for the second year in a row, Illinois 4-H won the National 4-H Skillathon at NAILE.

This is the first time in Illinois 4-H history to have two teams from Illinois take home national champion titles in the same year. In addition, the Illinois 4-H livestock judging team was named reserve national champion in the National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest! These titles represent months of hard work, grit, and determination from these outstanding youth!



With your help, the 4-H Foundation helps make more happen!

Travel to this national experience was made possible by the generosity of Illinois 4-H donors.



4-H members serve as thought leaders on the national stage

The Livestock Ambassador Team leads a session on youth development at NAE4-HYDP national professional conference.



Livestock Ambassador Team members presented at the Ignite Conference in front of 800 4-H youth from across the country. Fifty of the youth in the Illinois session committed to take it back to their home states and try to implement what we are doing in Illinois!





Youth livestock skillathons showcase future leaders of ag

“Skillathons allow youth to demonstrate and expand their knowledge through experiential learning, while also providing an opportunity to develop life skills like problem solving”

Myla Munro, 4-H youth development educator

Core program support of animal sciences is provided by the generosity of



Livestock Skillathon

As a result of participating in Livestock Skill-a-Thon, respondents increased their knowledge and skills around feeds, livestock production, breed identification, livestock equipment, and meat cuts. The biggest knowledge gains were around feeds and meat cuts. The biggest skill gains were in judging wool and judging hay quality.

88% of respondents said after livestock skillathon they are quite or extremely likely to identify the breed of their livestock to better care for it.

86% of respondents said after livestock skillathon they are quite or extremely likely to use livestock equipment only for its intended purpose

One action youth intend to take as a result of attending the 4-H Livestock Skill-a-Thon:

- Learn how to properly use equipment
- Learn to judge
- Feed my livestock better feed
- Use knowledge about feed to feed show animals
- Learn more about meat judging and wool judging

Photo credit: Shelby Carlson

80% of respondents said after livestock skillathon they are quite or extremely likely to change their livestock feed depending on breed or production needs

71% of respondents said after livestock skillathon they are quite or extremely likely to inspect the quality of hay before starting their livestock program

The most important thing(s) kids learned at 4-H Livestock Skill-a-Thon:

- The nutrition of animals
- How nutrition affects animals and different meat cuts
- How to identify breeds of cattle and hogs
- Better knowledge of meat judging
- There are a lot more tools for animal care than I thought

Growing Future Scientists: 4-H Embryology Puts Hands-On Learning in Action

The Illinois 4-H Embryology program reached 14,679 students in 284 classrooms this year.

- 96% of teachers indicated they want to complete the embryology program again next year.
- Students showed a 20% increase in critical thinking skills after the program 57%.
- The pre and post evaluation data indicates a 39% increase in participants ability to interpret, analyze, and reason, at the end of the embryology program

“This project is so beneficial to students and really brings the experiential learning model to life for them – So much is taught and the kids love it!”

Participating
Teacher



Inspiring the next generation who will feed a growing population

The Midland 4-H Meats Judging Team competed in the National 4-H Meats Contest in Manhattan, Kansas, placing 12th in the nation! These young leaders are using their skills today and are ready to lead tomorrow.

A Gifts that Pays you Back

A charitable gift annuity (CGA) is an easy, popular option that allows you to transfer cash or appreciated, marketable securities to the University of Illinois Foundation (UIF), and, in exchange, you — or up to two people you choose — receive a fixed annual payment for life. After the income beneficiaries pass away, the remaining funds are used to support the Illinois 4-H Foundation.

When you use appreciated securities, you can save on capital gains tax. CGA donors also receive an immediate income tax deduction, subject to applicable limitations, and, in most cases, a portion of their payments are tax-free. UIF does not offer CGAs in all states.

You can also transfer assets to UIF to establish a charitable remainder trust (“CRT”), which then makes payment to you or others for life, or for a term not to exceed 20 years, or a combination of the two. CGAs and CRTS can also diversify your portfolio, and, when they’re terminated, the remaining assets will be used to support the Illinois 4-H Foundation.



4-H Memorial Camp in Monticello: among the nation's best*

The proof is in the big smiles, new friendships, and memories made!



Camp wouldn't be camp without our counselors and staff! Scan the code to hear our campers and counselors tell us what makes the job (and camp!) so extra special or head to go.illinois.edu/CampCounselorVideo

4-H Memorial Camp is celebrating 75 years in 2025! Sign up at go.illinois.edu/CampTurns75 to get more info on the upcoming celebrations!





Photo credit: Niki Hoesman



Photo credit: Katie Duitsman

1,380 lives impacted at summer camp!

*4-H Camp in Monticello was named one of Newsweek's Best Summer Camps 2024, complete with a five-star rating. This list presents the 500 best U.S. summer camps, ranked based on a 2023/2024 survey comprised of 30,000 parents and nearly 700,000 social media reviews.

Your gift helps 4-H do more!

GIVE TO SUPPORT

- 4-H Environment Fund
- 4-H for Our Future Fund
- 4-H Memorial Camp



Camping & Outdoor Living



Mission: Transforming the lives of children of wounded, ill, and fallen military heroes through the power of summer camp, family camp, advocacy and enrichment programs.



Illinois 4-H is proud to offer Camp Corral and Air Force Camp!

These programs offer recreational programs designed specifically to empower America's military children to make connections, build coping skills, and increase self-confidence. These summer camp programs are offered to children ages 8 to 15 of wounded, ill and fallen military service members and veterans. Camps for military kids help build life skills to empower strong, resilient, independent individuals.

Global Civic Engagement



4-H youth leaders are putting their public speaking skills to work today one conversation at a time as they engaged with legislators at the Capitol and share their 4-H story as a part of Legislative Connection.

Photo credit: Tina Veal

Legislative Connection Fact Sheet



40 teens attended over **4 days**.



4-H'ers are known for their trademark green shirts and green and white M&M packets.



Youth book appointments directly with state leaders.



Youth communicate the value and impact of 4-H using persuasive public speaking techniques along with data and examples as they tell their 4-H story to legislators.



“The Legislative Connection is a wonderful way for youth to share their stories about their 4-H experiences and activities directly with their legislators. 4-H youth gain communication and civic engagement skills and work together in teams to convey the value of 4-H positive youth development to individuals who make policy decisions for the state.”

Dr. Shelly Nickols-Richardson, University of Illinois Extension
Director and Associate Dean



4-H creates empowered youth advocates

Ross Vancil of Henderson County represented Illinois 4-H at Illinois Ag Legislative Day at the Illinois State Capitol. IALD brings together representatives from nearly 50 diverse agricultural organizations to meet with state lawmakers.

“4-H empowers generations of leaders and change makers who will continue to make a positive difference in our communities and beyond.”

Ross Vancil

“We pledge our hands to larger service”



As part of our **True Leaders in Service Event**, our members reported events that involved

383

4-H members

117

4-H volunteers

70

hours of service

45,000

lives impacted!



Illinois 4-H is preparing youth for the future

Youth in the 8th-12th grades took a road trip to explore different career and technical paths at Illinois 4-H Road Trip College & Career Day

“It gives me more confidence when I go into my future, especially with the resumes and finding information. I feel more prepared for the things I want to do and can ask for help when I need to.”

Event Attendee



Photo credit:
Sophia Schneider,
4-H Influencer

Because of participating in the event, surveyed participants said:

82%

are extremely or somewhat likely to recommend the event to a friend

78%

of them said that because of this program they are excited to learn more about the career fields they are interested in

78%

of them said that participating in this program will help them in their decisions about college



Photo credit:
Sophia Schneider, 4-H Influencer

This event built strong partnerships to show participants just how many paths there were to choose from after high school. Partner organizations included:

- East Central IL Building & Construction Trades Council
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
- Illinois Fire Service Institute-University of Illinois
- United Prairie
- ETI School of Skilled Trades
- Golden Apple Foundation
- University of Illinois Springfield
- Chicago State University
- Southern Illinois Edwardsville
- Greenville University
- Northern Illinois University
- United States Army
- United Medical Response, LLC
- Equip for Equality
- Midwest Technical Institute
- Indiana University Bloomington
- Millikin University
- Galesburg Fire Department
- Illinois Student Assistance Commission
- University of Illinois



Today's 4-H youth are tomorrow's research scientists!

Youth from Vermilion County, presenting in the Youth Participatory Action Research program in collaboration with 4-H, University of Illinois College of ACES and the University of Illinois Family Resiliency Center showcase their research poster at the University of Illinois Undergraduate Research Symposium.

A Gift through your estate

A bequest is one of the simplest ways to make a deferred gift and you maintain control of your assets during your lifetime. You can make a bequest by including UIF — for the benefit of the Illinois 4-H — in a provision via your will or living trust. Please share the following language with your estate-planning attorney.

"I leave (\$x, /x%/# of shares/residue) to the University of Illinois Foundation, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation (Tax ID 37-6006007), for the benefit of the Illinois 4-H Foundation supporting the Illinois 4-H Youth Development Program.

Naming UIF beneficiary of your transferable-on-death or payable-on-death brokerage or investment accounts are also wonderful options to support 4-H. We can work with you or your advisor to develop customized language that reflects your wishes. To learn more contact Angie Barnard at abarnard@illinois.edu or 217-333-9295 or Judy Schneider, UIF Director of Gift Planning judiths@uif.uillinois.edu or 217-244-3351

College & Career Readiness support was provided by the generosity of





Welcome to the Real World: Career Exploration, Decision Making, and Money Management Program for Young Adults

In the 2023-2024 4-H year, nearly 3,000 middle and high school age youth across 25 Illinois counties completed Welcome to the Real World. What impact did this program make on the lives of young people?

83%

agreed that the program was interesting

88%

agreed that the experiential activities were helpful

81%

agreed that the program would help them in their future.



Photo credit: Jake Keister

We asked youth, “How has your view of life in the future changed as a result of participating in the Welcome to the Real World Program?”

Reflections were offered by more than 1,200 evaluation respondents and grouped into the following themes, including a few examples of actual comments shared in their own words:

Feeling more confident and ready for the real world. While most comments suggested how their world view had changed in terms of what they will pay attention to when navigating personal finances in adulthood, many expressed a sense of confidence and readiness to face the world because of participating in the activities and simulation.

“It has changed a lot thanks to this experience. I now have a chance of believing I can make it in life.”

“I feel like life in the future won’t be as hard and stressful since I got an understanding of it.”

Choose your career wisely as it can have a big impact on your projected income. Many did not know what the salary projections were for their chosen careers. While not a sole factor in career exploration, some noted that this is a factor to consider.

“Getting a well-paying job does help make me happier. I was doing the cheapest option every time, if I’d been able to do more medium price stuff, I’d be happier.”

“I realized that jobs pay less than I thought.”

Pay attention, make good decisions, and focus on needs first. Youth referenced a new understanding of being intentional in monitoring expenses (balanced with income), in making spending decisions that focused first on needs then wants, (if enough money was left over).

“You’re going to have to make due (sic) without some things and it’s better to have a plan”.

Empowering tomorrow’s scholars

High school students prepared for college with a set of comprehensive virtual sessions State 4-H College Application and Scholarship Series.

Attendees gained valuable insights on writing compelling personal statements, exploring various post-secondary options, and mastering scholarship applications. Students left with the knowledge and confidence needed for their journey to higher education!





Photo credit: Mackenzie Goff, 4-H Influencer

Your gift helps 4-H do more!
GIVE TO SUPPORT

- Illinois 4-H College and Career Readiness Fund
- 4-H Youth Leadership Fund



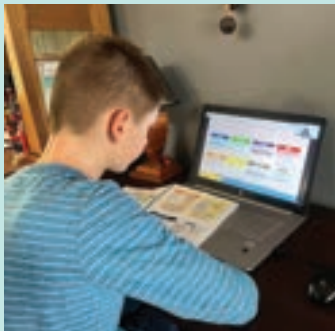
Trying a social media career on for size!

4-H Influencer Mackenzie Goff tries out the YouTube Shorts activation at the Ignite Conference where youth learned how to turn their passions into impactful YouTube Shorts. Participants got tips from special creator guests, James Hobson from Hacksmith Industries, Greg Peterson from Peterson Farm Bros, and Jibby Ani from Studio Jibby!



4-H Influencer Team's first year: Influencers "share" successes

- ◉ **Interpersonal Skills:** The team consistently helped improve interpersonal skills, emphasizing effective communication, collaboration, and relationship-building.
- ◉ **Creativity:** The team focused on fostering creativity, indicating an emphasis on innovative thinking and imaginative problem-solving.
- ◉ **Leadership:** Development of leadership skills was a common theme, suggesting efforts to empower individuals to take on leadership roles, make decisions, and guide others effectively.
- ◉ **Workforce/Internship Readiness:** The team contributed to preparing individuals for the workforce or internships, indicating a focus on practical skills and knowledge relevant to professional settings.
- ◉ **Digital Marketing Proficiency:** Many responses mentioned the development of digital marketing proficiency, suggesting a focus on skills related to online marketing strategies and tools.



Pixel Pioneers: Inspiring Young Designers Across the State

Pictured is Grant Hardy of Bureau County Open Door 4-H club participating in session one where color theory was explored. Ninety youth throughout the state enrolled to learn more about digital design. This included learning about how colors have both positive and negative connotations associated with them and how it is important to keep these in mind when designing for specific audiences. Participants also discussed typography, brand recognition and logos, layout basics, and a culminating design challenge.

4-H Pixel Pioneers: A virtual SPIN club where youth explore the world of digital design.

90% of participants learned new ideas or concepts in graphic design.
93% of participants felt they have the tools to continue their exploration of graphic design.



Empowering Youth with Lifelong Public Speaking Skills

Illinois 4-H Youth Education in Agriculture reps Kadie Pierson of Clay County, Anthony Joiner of Macoupin County, Janella Neary of Monroe County, and Andrea Schaffnit of Adams County attended the Illinois Farm Bureau Annual Meeting to share a youth voice and perspective on the future of agriculture!

Our reps listened to them to learn about issues in the industry, advocacy, public speaking, and more.

Our 4-H youth participated in the flag ceremonies, led the pledges, listened to sessions, attended the discussion meetings, represented 4-H in media interviews and helped with the IAA Foundation All in for Agriculture Auction which raises money for Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom.



4-Hers walk the red carpet!

Three talented 4-H members from Central Illinois walked the red carpet at the premiere of the feature film *American Criminals*. Brennan Shoemaker and Keeley Shoemaker from Jersey County, along with Genevieve Emery from Macoupin County, were not only part of the film's cast as extras but also had the opportunity to see themselves on the big screen at the movie premiere.

Members and their parents received the opportunity to work on this project in June 2023 in Carlinville. 4-H'ers gained on set experience as film extras and were able to work on set with actors. They also experienced all facets of movie making magic including lighting, filming, and costuming. In addition, members experienced working with a choreographer in a very short time for a scene.



“The experience was overall very fun,” says 4-H’er and cast member Genevieve Emery. “I got to meet new people and have new opportunities. This experience was overall one of a kind, and I would love to one day work in the film industry. My favorite thing was probably being able to see the movie on the big screen as well as seeing all of the friends that I made.”



This was made possible by
**Central Illinois Film
Commission**



Local solutions to global challenges: IL is 3000 trees richer thanks to 4-H'ers!

Carbon neutrality and nutrient runoff are complex issues, but University of Illinois Extension 4-H specialist Curt Sinclair has a simple solution: plant trees.

The 4-H Green Communities Tree Program, initiated in 2021, aimed to increase Illinois' tree population, focusing on oak savannas, which are critical to the state's ecological health.

"We need to become 'carbon neutral' by producing less CO2 gas and finding new ways to absorb and hold these carbon molecules so they don't get trapped in the atmosphere which adds to the warming of our planet," Sinclair said at the program's launch. "At the same time, we need to reduce storm water runoff to improve water quality."

The 2020-2030 Illinois Forest Action Plan, part of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, outlines the benefits of trees to Illinois residents.

"More trees will move us closer to cleaner water, healthier soils, more animals and birds, greater biological diversity, and cleaner air," Sinclair says. "All these are critical to people's health and quality of life."

Sinclair, alongside Illinois 4-H members, has spent the last three years partnering with the



Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts to increase that number. The effort, 4-H Green Communities Tree Program, is supported by grant funds from the Illinois Forestry Development Council and focuses on action, education, and conservation.

Three years into the initiative, it's safe to say the program has achieved remarkable success. Since its inception, 2,950 oak trees have been planted at 118 sites across 66 counties in Illinois. These efforts have been supported by grant funds from the Illinois Forestry Development Council and have made significant strides towards the goals outlined in the 2020-2030 Illinois Forest Action Plan.

Sinclair and his team are determined to continue this positive trend.

"Our vision is to continue the tree planting program until we have planted at least one oak savanna in every county in the state," Sinclair says. The AISWCD Forestry Committee, SWCDs, and Extension 4-H consider this project to be an overwhelming success and plan to seek funding for a similar planting in the spring of 2025.

The 4-H Green Communities Tree Program follows the "learn-by-doing" philosophy of 4-H and is guided by the priorities of the Illinois Forest Action Plan. More trees will move us closer to cleaner water, healthier soils, more animals and birds, greater biological diversity, and cleaner air—all critical to people's health and quality of life.

The 4-H Green Communities Tree Program is funded by a combination of sources including corporate and individual donors which match grant funding.





87%

of survey respondents said because of this program I now know more about Illinois' natural resources.

93%

of survey respondents said this program taught me ways that I can help protect natural resources and why that is important.

93%

of survey respondents said this program showed me that how I treat the environment today will affect other people tomorrow.

Living their bass life

“I love fishing because it is fun, I get to be outside and spend time with my dad and siblings.”

Bryce, age 8



Your gift helps 4-H do more!

GIVE TO SUPPORT

- 4-H Environment Fund
- 4-H for Our Future Fund
- 4-H Memorial Camp



269

youth participated in the 2024 4-H Hooks Us Together Fishing Tournament

Support of our Environment work was provided by the generosity of



The 4-H team is right on target!



Photo credit Michael Kloth

Youth traveled to the 4-H National Shooting Sports competition in Grand Island, NE to compete against the best of the best in the nation. What do these national competitions teach our 4-H youth? Sportsmanship, determination, and the value of creating a goal and sticking with it!

Your gift helps 4-H do more!

GIVE TO SUPPORT

- Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports program fund
- 4-H for our Future Fund



With your help, the 4-H Foundation helps make more happen!

Entry fees to this national experience were made possible by the generosity of Illinois 4-H Foundation donors



Special thanks to our State Shoots sponsor, Illinois Ducks Unlimited



Taking Aim at Excellence: Illinois State Shoots help youth take local skills to the state level

“Colleges send official recruiters to the State 4-H shoot. I believe that they know Illinois 4-H helps grow great young people full of potential and they know where to find them.”

Curt Sinclair Natural Resources and Shooting Sports 4-H Specialist



Scan the code to watch video coverage of our Fall 2024 State Shotgun Shoot or head to go.illinois.edu/FallShotgunShoot



This generation is “a force to be reckoned with”



With your help, the 4-H Foundation helps make more happen!

Travel to this national experience was made possible by the generosity of Illinois 4-H Foundation donors



4-H Member Advocates for Agriculture at National Ag Day in D.C.

Krish Nangia of DuPage County was chosen by National 4-H as a youth representative from 4-H, FFA, AFA, and MANRRS to participate in an Agriculture Council of America (ACA) sponsored program to connect student representatives with legislators face to face on the future of agriculture and personally emphasize the importance of agriculture in our everyday lives with stakeholders. Teens were chosen for their professionalism and passion about agriculture, the environment, food and their community.



With your help, the Illinois 4-H Foundation helps make more happen!

Travel to this national experience was made possible by the generosity of Illinois 4-H Foundation donors



Photo credit: Krish Nangia

AgriDiversity Initiative Tackles Underrepresentation in Agriculture



Youth-Led Food Advocacy Projects are Driving Positive Change in Illinois Communities

- 8 new food advocacy projects supported through the Food Advocacy Grant program engaging 190 new youth leaders.
- Over \$40,000 invested to date in supporting youth-led food advocacy projects to promote food access in Illinois.



“My project ‘AgriDiversity’ is dedicated to exploring the underrepresentation of people of color in agriculture, pinpointing the underlying causes, and implementing solutions to advocate for inclusivity and equity in the industry. As my involvement with 4-H is in its early stages, I am committed to further enhancing its impact as I transition into the upcoming school year.”

Kaden Ambers,
Cook County



Women Changing the Face Of Agriculture

At the Women Changing the Face of Agriculture conference, young women in high school and college have the opportunity to explore the significant contributions of women in the agriculture industry and discover the wide range of career paths available. This event is an investment in their future careers, providing insights into fields such as agricultural business, education, agronomy, animal sciences, veterinary medicine, communications, engineering, environmental science, food science, law, marketing, and natural resource conservation.

4-H Youth Leadership Team members ran a booth, showcasing the positive impact of 4-H programs. These young leaders shared their knowledge and experiences, demonstrating how 4-H empowers them to explore agricultural careers and make a difference in their communities.

The Women Changing the Face of Agriculture conference is designed for young women who are passionate about agriculture and eager to explore the myriad of career possibilities in the field. It is a space where they can connect, learn, and be inspired by the dynamic role women play in shaping the future of agriculture.



“I became a member of 4-H with the intention of making a positive impact. I was determined not to be someone who simply complains about problems that could be addressed by someone who is willing to take action - that someone being me. I am passionate about my community and believe that everyone has the ability to be a leader; they just need to tap into their potential.”

Ignite Agriscience Delegate
Kaden Ambers



Photo credit: Kaden Ambers

Igniting the next generation of agricultural scientists

Youth delegates headed to D.C. for a 4-day Ignite Conference experience where high-school aged teens from across the U.S. connected, made memories and found their spark by exploring the best 4-H has to offer in Agriscience, Healthy Living, Career Readiness, STEM and Emotional Well-being.



With your help, the 4-H Foundation helps make more happen!

Travel to this national experience was made possible by the generosity of Illinois 4-H Foundation donors

Illinois 4-H is building youth who are open to challenge and discovery



Mindfulness programs are challenging youth to learn and understand thoughts and feelings in new ways!

63%

of respondents said they are better able to understand how others feel and think because they participated in a mindfulness program with 4-H

63%

of respondents said that when they are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, they know at least one adult they can go to for help because they participated in a mindfulness program with 4-H

54%

of respondents said they learned skills to remain calm when in stressful situations because they participated in a mindfulness program with 4-H

Skills youth learned in the program that they will use in their everyday life:

“How to control my emotions”

“I learned how to be kinder to myself”

“I learned I can ask parents for help”

Brain Builders: 4-H Youth Present Brain- Building Workshop at National Conference

Healthy Living youth leaders took the stage at the Ignite Conference to help show other youth how to get your brain in shape! Brain Builders: Shaping Minds for Lifelong Health was presented by Lilah Bonny of Shelby County, Katelyn Marley of Montgomery County, and Allison Sewell of McLean County.

Youth presenters led attendees in teams to explore how the experiences you have early in life shape not only your brain but also your lifelong health and the well-being of your community.

With your help, the 4-H Foundation helps make more happen!

Travel to this national experience was made possible by the generosity of Illinois 4-H Foundation donors



**Your gift
helps 4-H
do more!**

GIVE TO SUPPORT

- Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports program fund
- 4-H for our Future Fund





Photo Credit: Morgan Jones

Youth leader empowers adult learners

Illinois 4-H Healthy Living Ambassador Lilah Bonny of Shelby County recently took the initiative to share her knowledge and passion for youth development with the Shelbyville High School community. Bonny, inspired by her participation in the Ignite by 4-H Youth Conference in Washington, D.C., led a captivating Brain Builders workshop for the high school faculty.

This interactive session explored the topic of how early experiences in a young person's life can actually shape the way their brains develop, ultimately impacting their overall development and future success.

**Your gift helps
4-H do more!**

GIVE TO SUPPORT

- 4-H Healthy Living/
Nutrition Fund
- Illinois 4-H Foundation
Board of Directors
Endowment Fund





Of participants were NOT enrolled in a Food Science Project

As a result of participating in Fun With Food Science ...

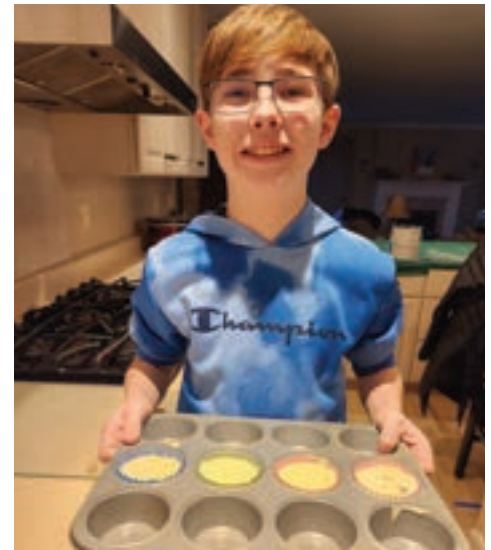


want to enroll in the Food Science Project to learn more

Fun with food science!

“I liked the stirring involved in the recipes and doing this project with my brother. It was fun!”

“I liked learning about how all my subjects at school can be applied to food science and what it takes to get a product to a consumer.”



The Illinois 4-H Food Science event combined virtual learning with at-home activities to teach 225 youth participants about food science, various careers, and the impact of smell on taste perception. This is in line with Illinois 4-H’s objective of promoting hands-on learning and fostering a passion for science among young people.

Teens learn about soy in the “It’s Soy Amazing” Challenge!

This year 455 youth across the state have challenged their culinary skills in local contests that led them to the first Statewide Challenge. At the culminating event youth from five counties compete for a chance to represent Illinois in the National 4-H Food Challenge in Texas with the Clinton High School team of DeWitt County taking home the top honors!

“It’s extemporaneous speaking in a culinary world.”

Jaylynn Schober, 4-H Educator

Teams have 40 minutes to:

- ◉ Identify the mystery ingredient
- ◉ Prepare a dish
- ◉ Research nutrition & cost info
- ◉ Identify food safety risks
- ◉ Create a presentation for judges

Learning Objectives:

- ◉ Showcase culinary skills and knowledge
- ◉ Learn from teammates
- ◉ Develop teamwork abilities
- ◉ Gain public speaking experience
- ◉ Foster youth leadership



All in this together for 25 years and counting The Youth Leadership Team turns 25!



The Illinois State 4-H Youth Leadership Team involves 15-22 4-H members and recent 4-H alumni (ages 16-21) who coordinate and assist with various area and statewide 4-H activities. Team members are involved in planning and implementing the Illinois 4-H Jr. Leadership Conference; assisting behind the scenes with events such as Illini Summer Academies and Illinois State Fair; serving as the training team for the Speaking for Illinois 4-H program; and serving on various statewide 4-H committees and boards (i.e. Illinois Farm Bureau Youth Education Committee), among other duties.

The Youth Leadership Team offers 4-H members and recent 4-H alumni an opportunity to give back to the 4-H program while further enhancing their leadership skills. The Team is actively involved in assisting the State 4-H Office in planning, implementing, and evaluating various 4-H events and activities; representing Illinois at National 4-H Conference; and serving as a youth voice of the Illinois 4-H Youth Development Program.

Why is the YLT still going strong after 25 years and what do its members love about it?



Support of Leadership work was provided by the generosity of



"Getting to meet new people across the state!"

Shelly Pierson, Clay County

"The connections and real-world experiences that I have had the opportunity to be a part of."

Andrea Schaffnit, Adams County

"We're like a family. We support each other and help each other out when we can."

Emma Hughes, Montgomery County

"Working closely with 4-H members from across the state to learn about their unique experiences and interests."

Julia Gergen, DuPage County

"The family I have made along the way - I know I have made some lifelong friends while leaving a lasting impact on my community with them."

Ojas Shah, McLean County

"Passing down the skills I have learned in 4-H to the next generation of 4-Hers who will be the leaders in 4-H and beyond."

Ross Vancil, Henderson County

"Being able to inspire younger youth to become leaders in their communities, clubs, and even state-wide teams."

Sofie Heidrich, Kendall County

"The ability to network with kids my age all around Illinois."

Ashley Walbring, Adams County

"The amazing community that we have between all the members on the team."

Alex Paul, Wayne County

"The network of friendships we make across the state. Together our small acts of service leave a big impact."

Amanda Niemann, Montgomery County



Future leaders, put your hands up!

Junior high school students attend the Junior Leadership Conference, a two-day conference that puts leadership skill-building into action with workshops that helped youth to build public speaking skills, learn how to effectively overcome obstacles, and how to be community leader. Team mixing and team building activities helped youth forge new friendships and build their 4-H network.



Leadership

“They gain essential life skills like networking, independence, and all the skills we are hoping for our next generation of leaders.”

Johnna Jennings,
4-H Educator



Events that make an impact!

95%

of respondents said they are passionate about the things they did at Junior Leadership Conference.

90%

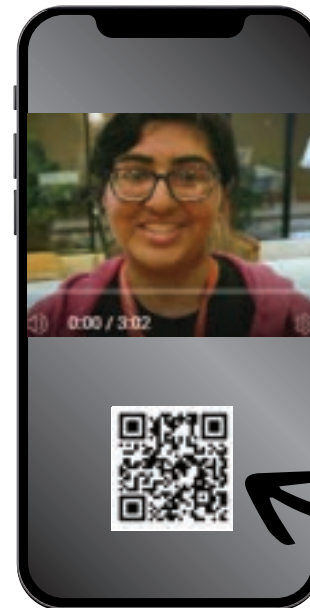
of respondents feel motivated to influence and impact others because of 4-H Junior Leadership Conference

93%

of respondents said that Junior Leadership Conference gives them the opportunity to explore something they really care about.

86%

of respondents feel confident in their ability to influence and impact others because of 4-H Junior Leadership Conference



Scan the code to watch video coverage of this year's JLC or head to go.illinois.edu/JuniorLeadershipVideo



Inspiring Excellence: National 4-H Congress in Atlanta Delivers Unforgettable Experiences



With your help, the 4-H Foundation helps make more happen!

Travel to this national experience was made possible by the generosity of Illinois 4-H Foundation donors

What does success look like after high school?



Illini Summer Academies helped over 100 youth find out this summer as they worked with elite university professors and graduate students and lived on campus during this one of a kind event!



Photo credit:
Bailey
Callahan,
Influencer

92%

of ISA students said they were interested in attending the University of Illinois after attending their Academy

90%

of ISA students indicated they felt much more confident in the subject which they studied in their Academy

75%

of ISA students reported their interest in a career related to their Academy subject greatly increased

This year youth could pick from these academy paths (and envision these future careers!)



Business Academy

Related Careers: Accountant, Entrepreneur, Marketing Manager/Coordinator, Manager, Consultant, Portfolio/Wealth manager, Investment Banker, Data Analysis (in Business)

Digital Agriculture Academy

Related Careers: Agriculture Data Scientist, Precision Agriculture Technician, Ag Robotics and Automation Technician, Bioinformatics Researcher, Computational Biologist, Web/Mobile Programmer, Drone Pilot, Educator

Explore Sustainability

Related Careers: Conservation Biologist, Environmental Lawyer, Nutritionist, Environmental Engineer, Agriculture Professional, Environmental Justice Manager, Carbon Neutral Program Director, Corporate Sustainability Manager, Extension Specialist

Harness the Power: Applications of New Tech to Improve Agriculture

Related Careers: Plant Scientist, Academic Researcher, Plant Breeder, Data Scientist, Ag / STEM Educator, Project Manager, Electrical and Computer Engineer, AI Developer, Machine Learning Developer

Health Innovation Academy

Related Careers: Nursing, Patient Support, Hospital Support Services, Health Workforce Development, Clerical/Administration, Public Health, Pharmacy Technician, Health Educator, Hospital Social Worker, Health Care Provider, Care Coordinator, First Responder

Honeybee Biology and Beekeeping

Related Careers: Honey Bee Research, Entomologist, Farmer (Vegetable and Specialty Crops), Beekeeper, Biologist, Orchardist, Horticulturist, Honey Producer, Traveling Pollinator Services

Molecular and Cellular Biology

Related Careers: Molecular Biologist, Cellular Biologist, Research Specialist, Medical Fields, Biotechnology, Pharmaceuticals,

Forensic Sciences, Veterinary Medicine, Disease Control, Food Safety, Healthcare, Policy or Law, Agriculture, Wildlife Management

Narrative Design and Video Game Development with GDevelop

Related Careers: Game Designer, Game Developer, Mobile App Designer, Special Effects Artist, Game Tester, Character/Level Designer, Game Writer, Game Audio Engineer, Multimedia Specialist

Unlocking Your Leadership Potential

Related Careers: Medical Professional, Lawyer, Educator, Politician, Researcher/Scientist, Athlete/Coach, Armed Services, First Responder, Social Worker/Counselor

Veterinary Medicine & Animal Sciences

Related Careers: Veterinarian, Vet. Technician, Animal Caretaker, Animal Trainer, Public Health Advocate, Wildlife Manager, Marine Biologist, Animal Breeder, Kennel Manager, Researcher/Educator, Consultant

This event was made possible in part by the generosity of





Robotics Competition 2024!

It's one thing to program and build a robot; it's another thing to do it as a team!

Youth from 30 teams across Illinois demonstrated their learning, celebrated their accomplishments, and interacted with others who share an interest in robotics at the 2024 4-H Robotics Competition.

Illinois youth ages 8-18 competed in teams of three to ten youth at two levels of competition. Teams competing at the Rookie level had never competed in a 4-H, FLL/FTC/FRC competition. Those competing in the Advanced level had previously competed in those types of competitions. Teams begin preparing months before the competition.

Robotics/STEM
experience are
supported in
part by:





“From the foods that we eat, to the clothes that we wear, Agriculture plays both the lead, and several supporting roles in this theater. With the threat of drought, global disasters and worldwide food shortages, AgTech may be the hero mankind has been waiting for,” says 4-H youth development specialist Keith Jacobs. “It will be this generation of youth minds that will be charged with saving our civilization and innovating the changes we hope to see for our agricultural future and that’s what we’re challenging youth to bring to this competition.”



Scan the code to watch video coverage of this year’s Robotics competition or head to go.illinois.edu/Robotics2024

Events that make an impact

97%

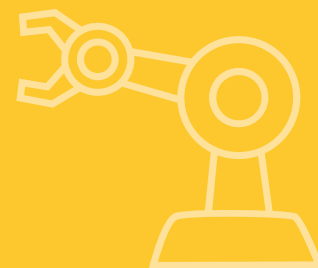
of Robotics participants surveyed feel supported by their club leaders

97%

of Robotics participants surveyed were able to use their creativity

93%

of Robotics participants surveyed improved their problem solving skills



Critical thinking and problem-solving skills take flight with drones!

All eyes were on the sky when Gallatin County High School students put their new-found piloting skills to the test by guiding drones through an obstacle course. In this week-long program offered by University of Illinois Extension and 4-H, students explored the fundamental principles governing flight mechanics, as well as career opportunities in the burgeoning field of drone technology. Hands-on sessions provided teacher David Matthew's physics and programming classes with invaluable insights into the practical applications of drones in modern agriculture and beyond.

Illinois Extension in Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Pope, Saline and White counties implemented the Drones in the Classroom state signature 4-H program for the first time in March 2024, marking a significant milestone in 4-H's commitment to empowering youth through innovative educational initiatives.



Photo credit: Lindsay Adams

4-H Youth Educator Lindsay Adams and Gallatin County Extension Program Coordinator Kassy Scates introduced the program, which represents a crucial expansion of Extension's diverse array of programs, all of

which are designed to enrich learning experiences in libraries, clubs, and classrooms across the state.

A highlight of the program included a special appearance

by the Shawneetown Fire Department and a demonstration of their search and rescue drone's advanced capabilities.

This state signature program underscores Illinois Extension and 4-H's dedication to educational excellence by offering programs that prepare youth to be future leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs, and problem solvers.



Writer: **Lindsay Adams**,
4-H Educator

Critical thinking and problem-solving skills take flight with drones!



AT&T is helping a team of teen digital ambassadors to assist older adults gain skills and confidence in today's digital world. This team of teen ambassadors provide training to adults who are new to computers or mobile devices, those who haven't used tech in a while, and anyone who just

needs a refresher on the basics.

The team plans and prepares training on technology basics like using mobile devices, searching the web, video conferencing, and staying safe online. More to come as these youth bridge the digital divide, one experience at a time!

Make a Tax-Free Gift from your IRA and Support Illinois 4-H

A tax-smart way to give.

IRA owners age 70½ or older can make a tax-free gift directly from their IRA to the University of Illinois Foundation (UIF)—a gift that counts toward your required minimum distribution (RMD) if one is due.

Known as a qualified charitable distribution (QCD), you can give up to \$105,000 in 2024 (annual aggregate limit) directly to the University of Illinois Foundation for the benefit of the Illinois 4-H Foundation to support the Illinois 4-H Youth Development Program. You pay no income tax on the amount transferred.

Another IRA Option-

Create a new retirement income stream. You can also consider a one-time, tax-free QCD (up to \$53,000 in 2024) to create a new charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder trust (some limitations apply), securing a lifetime income for yourself and/or your spouse.

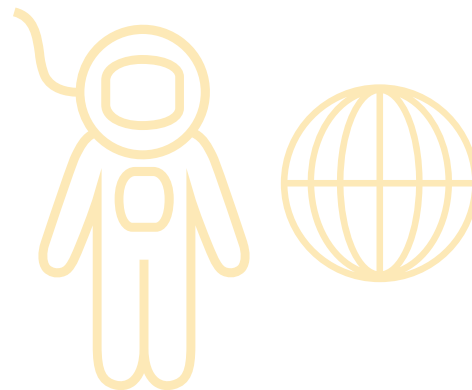


photo credit Kristi Stout

Trying on an astronomy career for size? #Thisis4H

Make a difference today & Save on Taxes with a gift from your IRA!

4-H creates one-of-a-kind events and partners with subject matter experts to give youth hands-on experiences they won't find anywhere else!





“I think this is my 48th year of being a 4-H leader plus my 10 year as a 4-H-er, once in your blood you bleed green!!.”

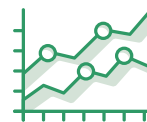
Vivian Hallett,
4-H Volunteer,
Cumberland County

The value of volunteers



2,400

adult
volunteers



30,000

projects
supported



230,000

hours



5,700

exhibits

Volunteers

“I love to see the kids try new things! Every year, I look forward to all of the amazing projects that the kids bring to the show! The 4-H world reminds me that there is still a lot of good in this world!”

Miranda Reedy,
4-H volunteer,
Piatt County



Research underscores that individuals who engage with 4-H during their formative years are not only more likely to attain economic stability but also exhibit heightened civic engagement compared to their counterparts in the general population. This sustained commitment to community well-being and active participation contributes to the vitality of local economies, showcasing the program’s profound influence on shaping responsible and industrious citizens all thanks to our amazing volunteers!



Extraordinary volunteers inducted into 2024 Illinois 4-H Hall of Fame

Illinois 4-H volunteers empower and prepare youth for success as the program relies on its more than 15,000 volunteers to fill key leadership and mentoring roles. Longtime volunteers and former staff members were recently honored by the Illinois 4-H Foundation for their selfless dedication to the University of Illinois Extension 4-H youth development program.

Boone Cheryl Sturges
Brown Matthew Perry
Bureau Susan Hildebrand
Calhoun Charles & Carole Casey
Carroll Sandra Imel
Cass Lori Critchelow
Christian Carla Mickey
Clark Sara Hosfield
Clay Mark Pierson
Cook Larry & Venita McDonald
Cook Mary & Randy Carben
Crawford Lendzy Stewart
DeKalb Dale Swanson
DuPage Lisa Kowalyshen
Edgar Cliff & Jennifer Macke
Edwards Martha Speir
Effingham Doug McCain
Fayette Debbie Boley
Fulton Wendy Johnson
Grundty Ron Frye
Hancock Jayne Eckhardt
Henderson Vicky Kever
Henry Chris Dobbels
Iroquois Jayme Senffner
Jackson Carmetha Waddy-Rice

Jasper Randy Probst
Jersey Janet Jones
Jo Daviess Janet Swift
Johnson Leslie Bradley
Kane Joseph Fidler
Kankakee Phyllis Burwell
Kendall Tammy Brigel
Knox Tom O'Connor
La Salle Lisa Corcoran
Lake Holly Hendershott
Lawrence Jim Brewer
Lee Michelle Snode
Livingston Karen Clark
Macoupin Paula Robinson
Madison Max Bremer
Madison Tamsey Bremer
McDonough Julie Hood
McHenry Thomas Linneman
McLean Sarah Van Note
McLean Richard Van Note
Menard Windell Milner
Mercer Phillip Moran
Monroe Kevin Schreder
Montgomery David and Lenore Ruppert

Morgan Kimberly Allen
Ogle Annette Martin
Peoria Fred & Miriam Rosenbohm
Putnam Margy Mattern
Richland Tammy Williams
Rock Island Mary Steiger
Saline Mary Wilson
Scott Larry & Pam Hembrough
Shelby Dianna Furr
Shelby Debora Fogleman
St. Clair Jenn Stoks
Stark Vicki Goerks
Stephenson Ann Johnson
Wabash Mary Sweppy
Warren Sharon Dew
Washington Lyle Lehde
Wayne Lisa Simpson
White Joe and Erica Zieren
Whiteside Christina Krum
Will Mark Schneidewind
Winnebago Cindy Anderson
Woodford David Schwind

Illinois 4-H Alumni and Volunteer Recognition Celebration Video

<https://go.illinois.edu/244HALumniVolunteerAwards>



4-H Salute to Excellence Awards

The Outstanding Lifetime Volunteer Award is given to an individual who has spent 10 or more years as a 4-H volunteer while the Volunteer of the Year Award is given to an individual who has volunteered for 4-H less than 10 years.



Gordon Kelm

2024 Outstanding Lifetime Volunteer Award
Whiteside County



Lendzy Stewart

2024 Volunteer of the Year Award
Crawford County

Congratulations to our Illinois 4-H Alumni Award Winners



Matt Hornbostel

2024 4-H Alumni Award Winner

Randolph County 4-H Alumna



Amanda Marquardt

2024 4-H Alumni Award Winner

Monroe County 4-H Alumna



Brett Dienst

2024 4-H Young Alumni Award Winner

Kane County 4-H Alumna



Jenna Wheeler

2024 4-H Young Alumni Award Winner

Morgan County 4-H Alumna



The James Hogendobler Family Named 2024 Illinois 4-H Family Spirit Award Winners

Illinois 4-H is pleased to honor The James Hogendobler Family from Pulaski County. 4-H is and has been a large part of this family's life. It spans five generations including 41 family members with 19 members affiliated with 4-H, 134 years of membership; 182 years of club leaders, 62 years of volunteerism and 32 years of showing at the Illinois State Fair. For the Hogendobler family, 4-H is a way of life.

To learn more about the 2024 Illinois 4-H Alumni Award winners:
go.illinois.edu/4HALumniAwardWinners

Nominations for the 2025 Illinois 4-H Alumni Awards are now open through March 15, 2025
More information: go.illinois.edu/4halumniawards



The Illinois 4-H Alumni Advisory Committee was established in May 2024 to support the strategic direction and objectives of the Illinois 4-H Alumni Association including telling the 4-H story to alumni, creating alumni engagement opportunities, recognizing alumni accomplishments and overall support of the Illinois 4-H program.

Caleigh Kupferschmid, District 1 Director

Mike Razim, District 1 Director

William VanWassenhove, District 1 Director

Bob Walberg, District 1 Director

Jeff Behme, District 2 Director

Mindy Brown, District 2 Director

Denny Wallin, District 2 Director

Craig Pessman, District 3 Director

Barb Schumacher, District 3 Director

Mallory Ames, Young Alumni Director

Caroline Ahrends, Collegiate 4-H Director

Emma Hughes, 4-H Ambassador Director

Krish Nangia, 4-H Ambassador Director

Ojas Shas, 4-H Ambassador Director

Myla Munro, 4-H Staff Advisory Committee Liaison

Tina Veal, Ex-Officio

Kevin Carey, Ex-Officio

Lisa Diaz, Ex-Officio



Are you Illinois 4-H Grown?

Register today or encourage a 4-H friend.

The Illinois 4-H Alumni Association seeks 4-H alumni to register for a free membership and stay connected.

go.illinois.edu/4halum

Illinois 4-H served as Grand Marshals for the 2024 Illinois State Fair Parades

Illinois 4-H youth, alumni, family and friends joined Illinois 4-H as they were selected to serve as the grand marshals of both the Illinois State Fair parade and the Du Quoin State Fair parade.



2024 Illinois State Fair - Lisa Diaz, Assistant Dean & Illinois 4-H Director and **Avani Rai**, 2024 Illinois 4-H Youth In Action winner served as the grand marshals in Springfield.



2024 DuQuoin State Fair - Rhonda Shubert, Perry County Youth Development Program Coordinator was recognized as a Grand Marshal for her years of dedication to the community.

Ideas for Giving

Donating appreciated securities or mutual fund shares that you have held one year or longer can be a tax-wise way to support Illinois 4-H. You will receive an income tax for the full market value of the gift (if you itemize) and may avoid federal and state tax on the capital gain.

IRA charitable gift: Distributions from your traditional Individual Retirement Account (IRA) and employer-sponsored retirement plans are considered taxable income. A charitable distribution from your IRA directly to the Illinois 4-H Foundation helps you avoid that increase in taxable income and makes a lasting difference in the lives of young people.

A Gift through your estate: A bequest is one of the simplest ways to make a deferred gift and you maintain control of your assets during your lifetime. You can make a bequest by including UIF — for the benefit of the Illinois 4-H — in a provision via your will or living trust. Please share the following language with your estate-planning attorney.

“I leave (\$x,/x%/# of shares/residue) to the University of Illinois Foundation, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation (Tax ID 37-6006007), for the benefit of the Illinois 4-H Foundation supporting the Illinois 4-H Youth Development Program.”

Naming UIF beneficiary of your transferable-on-death or payable-on-death brokerage or investment accounts are also wonderful options to support 4-H. We can work with you or your advisor to develop customized language that reflects your wishes. To learn more contact **Angie Barnard** at abarnard@illinois.edu or 217-333-9295 or **Judy Schneider**, UIF Director of Gift Planning judiths@uif.uillinois.edu or 217-244-3351.

INVEST TO

The Illinois 4-H Foundation would like to
Here is how those gifts are broken down.



4-H FOR OUR FUTURE FUND:

\$244,777 (30.5%)

These gifts help youth with what they need, when they need it!



4-H PROGRAM SPECIFIC:

\$295,934 (36.6%)

These funds help youth grow in a pathway of specialty interests such as shooting sports, food advocacy and more.

DAY, SHAPE TOMORROW

thank the over **1,800 donors** that provided **\$830,696** to the Illinois 4-H program in 2023-2024.



ENDOWMENTS:

\$66,153 (8.3%)

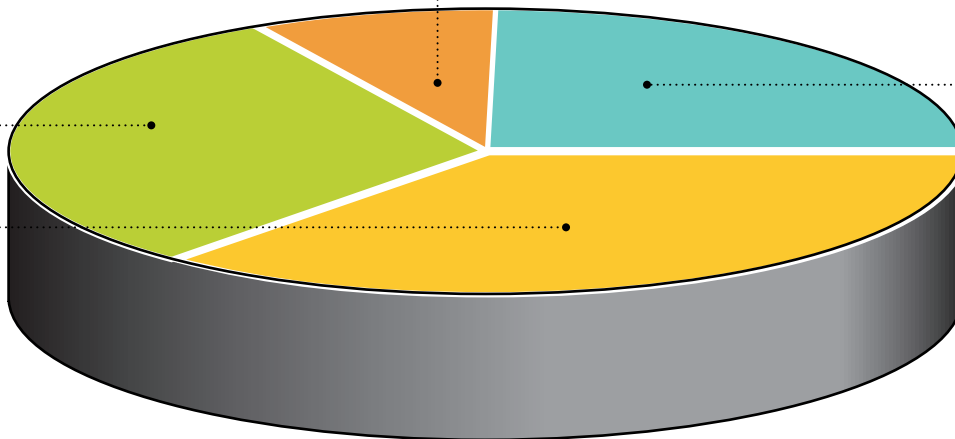
These create a lasting legacy that will detail your wishes and ensure your intentions can be carried out to support a specific 4-H program or area of your choosing.



COUNTY- SPECIFIC 4-H SUPPORT:

\$195,665 (24.6%)

Helps provide needs based county-specific support in programming, scholarships, and more.



What 4-H can do because of you!

997

Signature programs delivered to help youth face Illinois' challenges such as mental health head on.

182

New clubs reaching Illinois youth with the experiences, mentorship, and life skills they need to become productive adults.

Foundation Impact Report

The future starts here!

Last year, the Illinois 4-H Foundation provided \$45,000 in scholarships to fuel our future leaders, scholars, and innovators and we can't do it without you!



The Illinois 4-H Awards and Scholarship program honors an amazing group of young people who have made 4-H and their communities the focus of their time and talents. These 4-H youth are making a difference in their communities—growing gardens, packaging meals for the hungry, educating peers about healthy choices, designing technological solutions to today's issues, and extending a compassionate hand to those who need encouragement and support!

How did these 4-H youth get to where they are today? Scan the code or head to go.illinois.edu/4HAwardsVideo to listen to hear more about their stories and the difference these important funds make in their lives!



Scan the code to watch the action from the competition or head to go.illinois.edu/4HAwardsVideo