



Year in Review 2025

4-H Family News

Leelanau County



Dear Leelanau 4-H Community,

As the new year begins, I want to take a moment to reflect with gratitude on my first nine months in this role and on an incredible year for Leelanau County 4-H.

Throughout the year, we offered a wide range of programs, some long-standing favorites and some brand new. Youth gained hands-on skills and meaningful experiences, from learning how to drive a tractor, to tap dancing, to building confidence in the water through swim lessons. Many youth also used our 4-H iPads to explore creativity and technology, creating digital art, programming and running robots, and engaging with STEM in new and exciting ways.

Our youth truly shined at the fair this year, earning grand and reserve awards across multiple species including goats, llamas and alpacas, chickens, and cattle. Beyond the fair, Leelanau youth were active across the state and region through 4-H, participating in opportunities such as Exploration Days and Vet Science Camp, expanding both their skills and their horizons.

Looking ahead to the coming year, I am excited to bring back several programs that have been on pause, including the ski and snowboard program and the babysitting club, while also introducing new opportunities for youth and families. More details on these programs will be coming soon.

Thank you to our youth, families, volunteers, and community partners for making this year such a success. I am looking forward to another year of learning, growth, and connection through 4-H.

Sincerely,

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Program Coordinator

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2025 HIGHLIGHTS

4-H Swim School



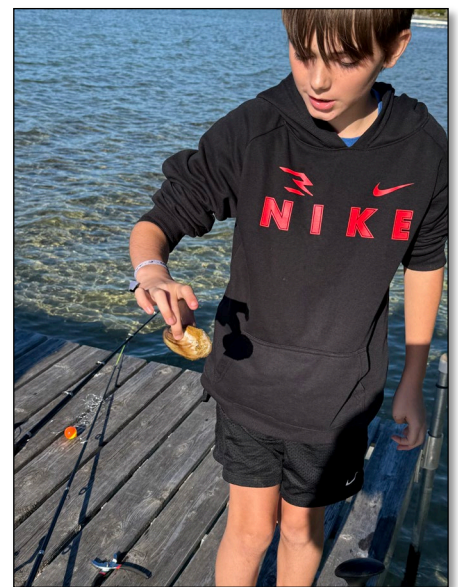
The first Leelanau County 4-H Swim School wrapped up this summer and provided youth with a valuable opportunity to build foundational swimming and water safety skills. Participants took part in a four-lesson swim program focused on skill development, safety, and confidence in the water.

Throughout the program, youth practiced a range of beginner swimming skills such as floating, blowing bubbles, entering the water safely, basic movement in the water, and general water safety awareness. Lessons were structured to build progressively, allowing participants to develop skills at their own pace in a supportive learning environment.

By the conclusion of the program, youth demonstrated improved swimming ability, increased confidence in the water, and a better understanding of water safety concepts. This new program added an important skill-building opportunity for Leelanau County youth and laid the groundwork for future aquatic programming through 4-H.

LIFT and 4-H Fishing Day Program

At Old Settlers Park on Glen Lake, a group of youth and volunteers came together for a one-day 4-H fishing program designed to teach conservation, outdoor skills, and teamwork through the “Michigan Fishing is Catching On!” and National 4-H Fishing Curriculum. Despite unexpected equipment troubles that left several fishing poles in disarray, the group’s spirit of perseverance shined through. Participants stayed positive, learned from the experience, and even discovered new opportunities, finding a clam in the shallows, sharing fishing poles, building teamwork in assisting each other, and sparking a future partnership with the LIFT program to strengthen future outdoor education efforts.





2025 HIGHLIGHTS

NW MICHIGAN 4-H FAIR



Fair week was an exciting and rewarding experience for Leelanau County 4-H youth, highlighted by outstanding participation, learning, and achievement across many species. Youth were recognized throughout the week for their hard work and dedication, including Lilian Gibson, who earned Reserve Grand Champion Halter Horse with her horse Lucy; Addi Anderson, Reserve Grand Dairy Feeder; Joey Roelofs, Grand Champion Meat Chickens; Luke Verschaeve, Reserve Grand Champion Junior Beef Heifer; Garrett Grant, recipient of the Excellence Award in the Steer Barn; and Kenneth Grant, who earned the Rising Star Award in the Steer Barn. In the alpaca and llama projects, Charlotte Crowther was named Grand Champion Open Obstacle and received the Rising Star Award, while Kinsley Crowther earned Grand Champion Pack and Open Reserve Champion Showmanship. Additional honors included Margaret Ritola receiving the Rising Star Award in the Lamb Barn; JC Oosse earning Grand Champion Market Production Pullets; Samantha Claar being named Reserve Champion Open Dairy Doe; Faith Steffens earning both Grand Champion Market Goat and Grand Champion 4-H Wether Goat; Judy Steffens receiving multiple honors including Reserve Champion Market Goat, Reserve Champion 4-H Goat Showmanship, Reserve Champion Market Doe, Reserve Champion Open Showmanship, and Overall Reserve Champion Breed Doe Open; Isabelle Plamondon earning Reserve Champion 4-H Chicken Showmanship; and Violet Claar earning Reserve Champion 4-H Rabbit Showmanship. The week concluded with the livestock auction on Thursday, August 7, which raised over \$1.3 million in support of local 4-H youth. Together, these achievements reflect not only months of preparation and learning by our youth, but also the strong community support that makes the Leelanau County 4-H program thrive.

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Pop-Up Farmers Markets



4-H and MSU Extension facilitated pop-up farmers markets and youth activities to help young people learn about local food systems and the incredible businesses throughout Leelanau County. These pop-up markets visited St. Mary's, Glen Lake, Northport, Suttons Bay, and Leland schools, providing students with hands-on exposure to locally grown and produced foods. Alongside the markets, 4-H and MSU Extension facilitated interactive learning stations including a smoothie bike focused on nutrition and healthy choices, a seed identification guessing game, taste testing and voting on favorite apple varieties, and hands-on apple cider making. Youth also engaged in creative and STEM-based activities such as crafts and robotic Sphero challenges, creating a fun and well-rounded learning experience that connected agriculture, nutrition, and technology.

smoothie approval

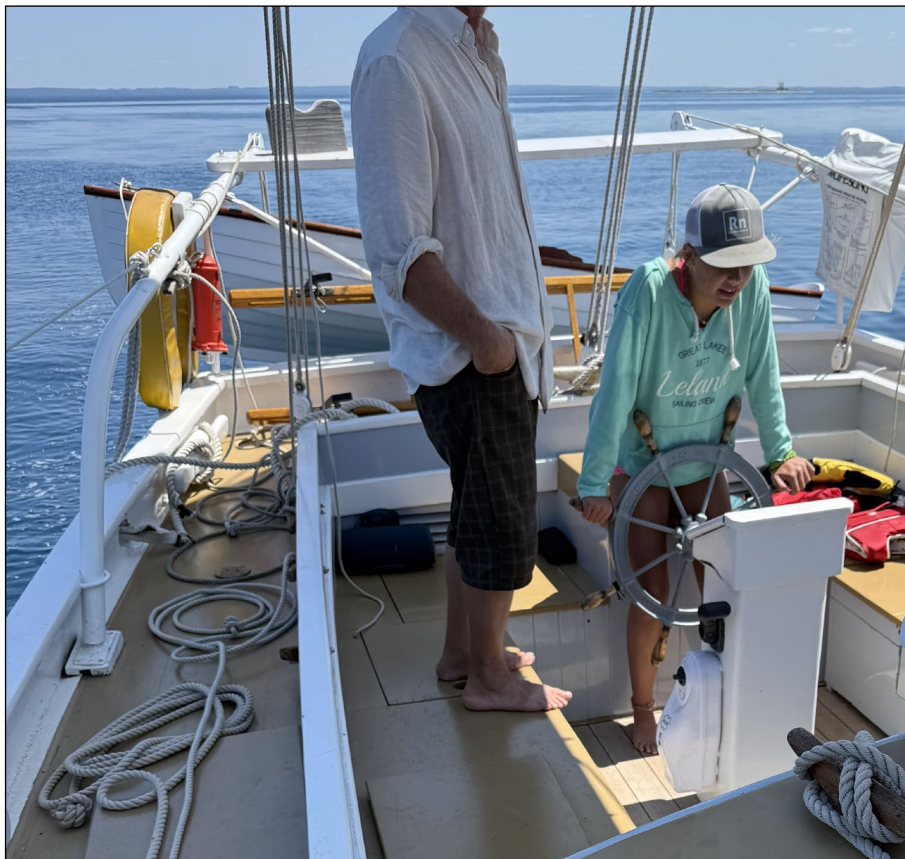




2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Sail Camp

The Sail Adventure Camp, facilitated by the Maritime Heritage Alliance, provided Leelanau County 4-H youth with a hands-on sailing experience on Grand Traverse Bay. Youth sailed from Northport to a nearby island and back, learning practical sailing and navigation skills along the way. Participants were introduced to the different parts of the sailboat, practiced raising and lowering sails, learned how to steer and captain the boat, and gained an understanding of basic navigation techniques. In addition to sailing skills, youth explored topics such as water ecology and boating safety, building awareness of both maritime traditions and environmental stewardship. This immersive experience gave youth the opportunity to develop confidence, teamwork, and leadership while learning new skills on the water.



Beyond Ready



Looking Forward to 2026!

WELCOME...

Leelanau County 4-H 2026 Clubs and Programs

- 4-H Differently Abled
- 4-H Gotta Lluva Cool Critter
- Fence & Field 4-H Club
- Frontier Quest 300 4-H Club
- Happy Hooves 4-H Club
- Lake Ann 4-H Livestock Club
- Make Our Way 4-H Club
- Pony Pals 4-H Club
- Proclites 4-H Club
- Small Town Farmers Club



**Beyond
Ready**

A brief overview of important dates and cool local events coming up in the next few months...

- Lambing Education Workshop on February 14th
- Babysitting Club starts in March!
- Livestock Council Education Expo is on March 1st
- Beekeeping Spin Club in March & April
- Exploration Days registration opens March 12th
- Animal Nutrition workshop March 22nd



Be the first to
know about
current events
by following
our social
media pages on
Facebook or
Instagram!

<https://www.facebook.com/LeelanauCounty4H>



STATEWIDE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

4-H Thriving Model of Positive Youth Development



Relationships are the foundation of a successful 4-H program! These relationships include building friendships with other members and leaders, building great working relationships and trust between program leaders and members, and adult leaders working together to organize great opportunities for youth.

We hope you can find others in the 4-H program in which you can build positive friendships and/or mentorships. Join us for any events and meetings to get to know everyone in the program.

Youth thriving is the first step in building youth who are #BeyondReady! Contact your local 4-H staff for more information.

January 13: Wild Spartans

Online

This month's session is "Nature's Detectives: How Insects Help Solve Crimes Against People, Animals and the Environment through Forensic Entomology." Tiny creatures can tell BIG stories about the world around us: explore creepy-crawly clues and learn how science and nature work together to solve puzzles. Ask questions through a live Q&A. This free virtual series is for youth ages 12-19.

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

January 13: Avoiding Money Mishaps

Online

In today's digital world, young people are increasingly targeted by fraudsters, scammers and predatory lenders. This interactive webinar will empower youth with the knowledge and tools to protect themselves and their personal information.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/avoiding-money-mishaps-jan13

January 21: Adulting 101 – Fraud Fighters: How to Stay Scam-Free

Online

From fake jobs offers to phishing texts, scammers are everywhere. This workshop breaks down the latest tricks and shows you how to guard your info, your credit, and your peace of mind.

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/events/adulting-101-2026>

January 24: 2026 State 4-H Rabbit and Cavy Show and Expo

Farm Bureau Pavilion, Lansing

4-H'ers exhibit rabbit and cavy projects and participate in educational knowledge contests: showmanship, skillathon, breed identification and rabbit hopping. **Register by January 14.**

www.canr.msu.edu/events/2026-state-4-h-rabbit-and-cavy-show-and-expo

January 26: Michigan 4-H Volunteer Webinar Series: Beyond Ready Basics

Every great 4-H experience has a few powerful ingredients—and volunteers play the biggest role in making them happen. Explore the four vital elements that help youth thrive: discovering sparks, feeling a sense of belonging, building developmental relationships, and staying meaningfully engaged.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/michigan-4-h-volunteer-webinar-beyond-ready-basics-bringing-the-vital-elements-to-life-in-your-4-h-club

February 7: 4-H Winterfest

Eagle Village Retreat Center, Hersey

4-H Winterfest is a hand-on learning camp for youth ages 8-12. Youth pick workshops and participate in team building activities. Come and have fun this winter! **Register by January 23.**

www.canr.msu.edu/events/2026-winterfest





STATEWIDE 4-H NEWS



Register for Michigan 4-H Capitol Experience!

At Michigan 4-H Capitol Experience, teens learn how to change the world for the better through engagement in Michigan's state government and public policy process. The program is scheduled for March 15-17, in Lansing.

The three-day event, open to high-school-aged youth, includes tours of the Michigan Capitol, interactions with state legislators, meetings with state agency staff, lobbyists and state-level experts and learning how policy is made. During the program, youth work in small teams to draft legislation on: agriculture; civil rights and youth advocacy; crime and law enforcement; education and teacher retention; environment and natural resources; health; and jobs, the economy and infrastructure.

The cost to attend is \$365, which includes lodging at the Okemos Conference Center. Please contact your local 4-H program coordinator to inquire about local funding opportunities. To learn more and/or find the link to register, visit www.canr.msu.edu/4_h_capitol_experience/.

Earn prizes with the Michigan 4-H Cash Composition Contest

Did you know youth are being targeted by scams too? That's this year's theme for the 2026 Michigan 4-H Cash Composition Contest! Michigan youth aged 9–19 are invited to participate through writing an essay on this year's question.

Top entries receive a \$100 gift card, thanks to contest sponsor, Extra Credit Union. MSU Extension will host two webinars to help with fraud awareness and essay writing. Essays are due by March 1. For contest details and essay submission information, visit: www.canr.msu.edu/4-h-money-smarts/money-smart-kids-contest.



Apply for the Michigan 4-H State Awards!

Michigan 4-H true leaders ages 10 and older have an opportunity to be recognized for the great work they do in 4-H and develop their career skills by completing a state award application. A Michigan 4-H State Award is the highest honor bestowed on a Michigan 4-H member and provides an opportunity to receive recognition for their engagement in rich learning experiences that result in outstanding knowledge and life-skill development.

State award applications are divided into four categories: Mark of Excellence contest (10-11 years), junior state award (12-15 years), senior state award (16-19 years) and group awards (13-19 years). An Achievement Award was added last year for 18–19-year-olds. Each application and selection process varies, dependent on the applicant's age.

More information about the Michigan 4-H State Award process and Mark of Excellence Contest can be found online at bit.ly/stateaward. Applications are due April 1. For more information, contact your 4-H program coordinator or email Betty Jo Krosnicki at nashbett@msu.edu or Janice Zerbe at rajzerj@msu.edu.

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Learn more about how you can grow with us!

https://www.canr.msu.edu/leelanau/leelanau_county_4_h/



**Beyond
Ready**