



National 4-H Week: IL Youth Program Offers Belonging and Learning for Kids

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ILLINOIS — 4-H members in Illinois will join the six million youth across the country in celebrating National 4-H Week Oct. 1-7. Clubs around Illinois celebrate this week by highlighting the remarkable 4-H youth in their communities and showcasing the incredible experiences that 4-H offers young people.

Illinois 4-H is the flagship youth program for University of Illinois Extension and the largest out-of-school youth organization in Illinois. 4-H youth development programs are available in every Illinois county. The program challenges youth to “learn by doing” with fun, hands-on activities. Kids can learn, practice, and demonstrate new skills while exploring the interests that are important to them.

In 4-H, youth are brought together in clubs that are led by caring adults who welcome them as a part of the larger 4-H family.

“Our goal is that whatever your interests or talents, 4-H is a program where you feel welcome and have a sense of belonging,” said Lisa Diaz, assistant dean and 4-H director. “4-H is a place where all kids can channel their gifts and achieve personal goals in a fun, welcoming setting.”

In 4-H, members learn about topics that interest them through projects. Project topics can include categories like cooking, robot-making, and caring for the environment, and members determine what aspects they want to learn about and what they will do to explore their topic.

“Letting youth guide what they want to explore allows the project to be self-paced and gives youth important skills in setting and working toward their goals,” said Diaz. “We make learning fun by letting kids engage with hands-on experiences.”

While the program has its roots in agriculture, 4-H has expanded to include new program opportunities such as drones, healthy living, leadership, creative arts, and more.

“4-H has always been about innovation. For over 100 years, we have been growing and adapting to the changing needs of youth and communities in Illinois,” says Diaz. “At the end of the day, we want every kid in Illinois to feel that they have a home in 4-H.”

Illinois 4-H members range in age from 8 to 18. Youth who are 5 to 7 years of age may join 4-H as a [Cloverbud](#) member. The cost to join 4-H for the year is \$20. New members can get more information by contacting their [local Extension Office](#), [fill out an interest form](#), or get more information about 4-H on the [Illinois 4-H website](#).

About Illinois 4-H: *Illinois 4-H is the flagship youth development program of University of Illinois Extension and administered through the College of Agriculture, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences. 4-H grows true leaders, youth who are empowered for life today and prepared for a career tomorrow. The hands-on approach in 4-H gives young people guidance, tools, and encouragement, and then puts them in the driver’s seat to make great things happen. Independent research confirms the unparalleled impact of the 4-H experience, demonstrating that young people are four times more likely to contribute to their communities; two times more likely to make healthier choices; two times more likely to be civically active; and two times more likely to participate in STEM programs.*

About Illinois Extension: *Illinois Extension leads public outreach for University of Illinois by translating research into action plans that allow Illinois families, businesses, and community leaders to solve problems, make informed decisions, and adapt to changes and opportunities. Illinois Extension is part of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences.*