



4-H Exploration Days

June 19 to 21, 2013 (44th year)

Audience

This program is for youth ages 11-19. The 2013 attendance totaled 2,603 youth, chaperones and resource people from 77 Michigan counties plus guests from Poland. This count includes 659 youth males and 1,384 youth females; 11.3% were people of color.

Funding

This is a fees-based program with a \$400,000+ budget. Full and partial scholarships are given to those unable to attend without financial assistance.

Objectives

This youth development conference is designed to:

- Increase youths' responsibility, confidence, independence, accountability, problem-solving, decision-making and time management skills.
- Increase youths' communication, team work, citizenship, and leadership skills.
- Foster participants' ability to meet new people and make new friends from different places and backgrounds.
- Develop and expand career and personal interests.
- Increase college exploration and access to the MSU campus and its resources.
- Develop social and academic skills needed for a successful transition to college and life as an adult.

Description

Two research-based tenets provide the foundation for this residential program's 30 intentional contact hours: youth development and experiential education. More than 200 action-filled classroom and field trip sessions were offered throughout the MSU campus and at various off-campus locations. Sessions were taught by 289 content and youth development experts (86 MSU faculty/staff, 123 adult volunteers, 20 teen volunteers, and 60 outside resource people). A wide variety of session content areas are available each year such as Animal & Veterinary Science, Careers, Communications, Environmental Education, Food, Nutrition & Fitness, International Language & Culture, Money Management, Performing & Visual Arts, and Technology.

When not in sessions, participants are engaged in meetings, campus activities and tours that give them access to the MSU campus and its wealth of resources. Participants stay in Michigan State University residence halls.

413 4-H volunteers contributed more than 20,000 hours of their time teaching and supporting youth to ensure a successful conference!

Outcomes

84% (N = 1,718) of youth participants completed the post-conference evaluation. Survey findings indicate that the program increased youth participants' interest in and readiness for college. Highlights include:

94.7% plan to attend college.

85.7% said the program better prepared them for college.

85.3% said they're excited to go to college.

81.2% increased their knowledge of the different majors, career paths, and opportunities available at MSU.

75.5% are interested in attending MSU.

The top life skills participants indicated they developed by attending this program were:

91.2% Accepting people who are different from them

91.0% Ability to follow through and complete tasks

91.0% Making decisions/choices

90.3% Communication

90.2% Time management

90.2% Being independent

90.2% Adapting to new living arrangements

88.9% Socializing and making new friends

Participants rated the following as top program highlights:

86.9% Educational sessions

84.6% MSU facility tours and activities

82.9% Living at MSU

Sample testimonials that reflect views expressed by many:

- I learned more about subjects I am interested in and discovered what career path I want to take.
- These days were fun, educational and amazing. In a short time I learned so much and did many new things.
- It helped me meet many new people, develop respect, and socialize with people that are different from me.
- I'm now more independent, confident and responsible.
- I improved my problem-solving and coping skills.
- It made me more open and willing to try new things.
- I liked the way it was hands on. It was great!

Additional Significant Information

- 4-H Exploration Days participants attend college at a significantly higher rate than their Michigan same-age peers.
- 4-H Exploration Days received the 2012 John Hannah Award for Extension program excellence.

Contact Information

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http://4h.msue.msu.edu/4h/4_h_exploration_days

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