



4-H Exploration Days

June 24 to 26, 2015 (46th year)

Audience

This program is for youth ages 11-19. The 2015 attendance totaled 2,507 youth, chaperones and resource people from 77 Michigan counties. This count includes 663 youth males and 1,313 youth females; 11.5% 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 over 200 content and youth development instructors (69 MSU faculty/staff, along with adult and teen volunteers, and outside resource people). A wide variety of session content areas are available each year such as Animal & Veterinary Science, Business & Entrepreneurship, Careers, Environmental Education, Food, Nutrition & Fitness, International Language & Culture, Money Management, Performing & Visual Arts, and Science, Engineering & Technology.

When not in sessions, participants 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.

4-H volunteers who served as instructors, session helpers and chaperones collectively contributed nearly 18,000 hours of their time to ensure a successful conference.

Outcomes

86% (N = 1,723) 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:

95% plan to attend college.

87% said the program better prepared them for college.

88% said the program made them excited to go to college.

88% gained awareness of career and job possibilities related to their skills and interests.

83% increased their knowledge of the different majors, career paths, and opportunities available at MSU.

78% are interested in attending MSU.

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

92.7% Time management

91.8% Ability to follow through and complete tasks

92.6% Adapting to new living arrangements

92.7% Accepting people who are different from them

92.8% Making decisions and choices

92.2% Being independent

91.0% Socializing and making new friends

Participants rated the following as top program highlights:

85.6% Living at MSU

84.6% MSU facility tours and activities

84.2% Educational sessions

Sample testimonials that reflect views expressed by many:

- I really enjoyed this program. It makes me SUPER excited for college.
- I will now be better prepared (for college) when going from my small town to a large university.
- Exploration Days made me really motivated to improve my grades so I can be on such a beautiful, fun campus for school!
- Exploration Days has helped me gain leadership skills and develop a career path.
- Exploration Days has shown me that it is possible to find a career that you love and know you can be successful.

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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