

Welcome New Members!

Dunlap Dynamite Kickapoo Kickers

William Kraft

Edelstein Eager Beavers

Eva Braker

Elijah Herrmann

Malachi Herrmann

Elise Joos

Ember Martin

Rhett Stoller

Levi Young

Edelstein Eager Limestone Leaders

Abram Harding

Oakley Freimuth

Kyra Powell

Brady Still

Mary Ann Strack

Rowan Russell

Jubilee Patriots Peoria Clovers

Cody Martin

Jedidiah Coulter

Jubilee Patriots Cloverbuds

Malachi Coulter

Important Upcoming Events

January

5 - ZSuite Enrollment Deadline for Livestock Projects

8 - Federation Meeting

10 - Stitch and Style Finish up day

14 - Next Session of Stitch and Style begins

17 - Sheep SPIN Club

24 - State Fashion Review

31 - Quilting Workshop in Knox

February

5 - Leader's Tea

6 - Sign up for Livestock Day

7 - Beef Weigh In

14 - Quilting Workshop

16 - Livestock Day

26 - Auction Committee Meeting

March

5 - Federation

26 - Public Speaking Contest

Want a hard copy of the newsletter?

Email Kristi at kristis2@illinois.edu



Hoping for the best in the New year!

This has been quite the year! We are almost through it! It is hard to believe how quickly fall has passed by, and now we are looking forward to a brand new year! I can't wait to see all of your smiling faces at the many upcoming events that we have! I hope you all have a relaxing, family filled holiday season! I can't wait to see you soon!

Kristi

Congratulations Caitlin!

Ten Illinois 4-H members who exemplified outstanding leadership in the agricultural industry and demonstrate a desire to remain engaged were recently recognized as 2025-26 Illinois Sustaining the Future Award recipients. Our own Caitlin Murphy from Peoria County has been chosen as one of the 10 4-H members who will represent Illinois 4-H at the Premier 20 Leadership Conference!

Way to go Caitlin!!!!

Office Closed Dates

Please remember the Peoria Office has some upcoming dates that the office will be closed! We will be closed from December 24 until January 2!

Livestock Enrollment Reminder

Please remember that if you are planning on showing Livestock this year, you MUST be enrolled by Monday, January 5th!



Peoria County 4-H / Raber Packing Co. President's Day 2026

Livestock Day 2026

Livestock Day 2026 will be held at Raber Packing Co on Monday, February 16 from 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM! We will again be hosting a skillathon as well as taking care of your YQCA requirement. If you want to show livestock, you MUST complete the YQCA Training! Cost is \$20, and will cover your meal, the training and a t-shirt! We can't wait to see you there!

<https://registration.extension.illinois.edu/start/livestock-day-2026>

ZSuite is OPEN for enrollment!

Enroll NOW!

4h.zsuite.org

You are now ready to start signing up in ZSuite! The enrollment fee is only \$5! If you need any help with enrollment, please let me know!

Fair Save the Date

This year's fair was SO FUN, we can't wait to do it again! Save the dates, the **2026 Peoria County 4-H Fair will be held the week of July 15-17, 2026**. We still aren't sure where we will be, but we are pretty confident on the "when"!

"Pet Class" added for Sheep

One of our species (rabbits) already offers this style of class. We will be expanding this class to sheep as well this year! Be looking for that in the 2026 show book.

Trophy Thank you Reminder

Remember to send a thank you note to the generous donors who provided trophies and awards for this year's fair. There are addresses on the back of your banners or magnetic plates on your trophies. PLEASE make sure to send a thank you note to whoever sponsored your trophy! They like to hear how you did, and the different details about your project! . If you need help with contact information, please reach out to the office.



Illinois Extension
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In our four-county Extension unit, a team works together to provide 4-H programming. Each county has an individual 4-H program plus we all work together on unit-wide events and program planning.

Krista Gray

4-H Program Coordinator, Fulton County

Joli Pierson

4-H Program Coordinator, Mason County

Abbie Phillips

4-H Program Coordinator, Tazewell County

Kristi Smith

4-H Program Coordinator, Peoria County

Lynda Sharp-Lower

4-H Program Coordinator, Tazewell County

Judy Schmidt, Metro 4-H Youth Educator

Earl Allen, County Director

Deb Balagna, Fulton Office Support

Paula Lane, Mason Office Support

Angela Sassine, Peoria Office Support

Julann Schierer, Tazewell Office Support

Stitch and Style Academy

Stitch and Style Academy is an amazing partnership between Peoria County 4-H and Peoria Fashion Week! The newest session will be kicking off on Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at the University of Illinois Extension Office in Peoria! This free 11-week sewing course meets every Wednesday from 4:00-6:00 PM starting January 14, 2026. Students will learn basic sewing skills, machine safety, pattern reading, and garment construction. The program will conclude with a final showcase at Peoria Fashion Week 2026, where students will have the opportunity to present their finished look on the runway. Please apply here:

<https://form.jotform.com/253345009265051>

We have 10 spots available!

Quilting Workshop Series

At this fun two-part workshop series, you'll turn leftover 4-H shirts into a cozy keepsake quilt!

Hosted at the Knox Agri Center, 180 S. Soangetaha Rd, Galesburg, IL Date: Part 1: January 31, 2026; Part 2: February 14, 2026, 9 AM – 12 PM (both sessions)

During Session 1, you'll learn how to piece together your quilt top by cutting the shirts, utilizing fabric stabilizer, and preparing your backing and batting. You'll put it all together in Session 2 by sewing your quilt top to your backing and batting, quilt the outside border of your blanket, and hand tie your quilt. We strongly encourage you to attend both sessions to get the most out of your experience.

If you have your own sewing machine, please bring it to the workshop to practice on. If you don't have a sewing machine, we have several you may request to use for the workshop.

Registration will close on January 15. If you have any questions, please reach out to Kristi Smith (Peoria County 4-H, kristis2@illinois.edu) or Emma Flack (Knox County 4-H, emmame2@illinois.edu)

<https://4h.zsuite.org/event-registrations/43622>

Beef Weigh In

The 2026 Beef Weigh in will take place at Illiff Vet Clinic from 8 am to noon! Please be on the property by 11 AM. Please let me know if you are planning on being there!

Club Reports

Please continue to email your Reports to: kristis2@illinois.edu

Edelstein Eager Beavers

On November 17 the Edelstein Eager Beavers had a club meeting. Loretta Eisenmann graciously opened her home to show us her miniatures and to talk about them. Her basement was full of miniatures that ranged from a camper to a big cabin with all the accessories. They were all very intricate and amazing. Then we went to Skyline Nursing Home and had our meeting. Also, during the week of the 17th -21st we had our auction fundraiser. It was a great success and we are thankful for all of our supporters.

On December 8 the Edelstein Eager Beaver Club had another meeting. First, we caroled at the ARC Nursing Home. Then we went to Weiland's shed and had a pizza party. Lastly we had our meeting and did a fun white elephant gift exchange.

Submitted by Esther Young

Federation Report

Peoria 4-H members, ages 13 to 18 are invited to join Federation. The group meets monthly, plans special county 4-H events, gets involved in leadership roles at unit 4-H events, and enjoys a lot of fun activities together. The group meets on the first Thursday of each month, 6 to 8 p.m.

We have a BUSY and FUN Winter and spring planned for Federation! In January, we will have a regular meeting. Federation will be hosting the Leader's tea on Thursday, February 5th at 6:30 PM. Invitations will follow! If you are looking to get more out of 4-H, THIS IS YOUR CHANCE! We have a lot of fun in Federation, and even learn things sometimes! See you there!

Livestock Judging Team

Want to join a team that has a ton of fun, and still somehow manages to learn about livestock? Look no further than the Livestock Judging Team! We meet on Tuesday nights at Kristi's house. No prior livestock experience is NOT required!

Dog Training in the New Year!

If you are interested in Dog training for the coming year, Hannah Martin and Melissa Baer have so graciously stepped up to help you learn about training your dogs! Training will begin towards the end of January at the Martin's shed! If you are looking for a puppy to show, Hannah might also know of some available puppies 😊 Fill out the form so we can gage interest: <https://forms.gle/piM998v2cuF6nvxC8>

Showbook Cover Design

Contest

It's almost the most wonderful time of the year again: SHOW SEASON! To help us prepare, please enter our Showbook Cover Design Contest! Submit your design on a piece of paper, or email it to me! The design should include the Fair Dates (July 15-17, 2026), and should include a space that I can add the location to. The theme for this year is "Red, White and Blue and Clover too!" Showbook entries should be into the office no later than 4:30 PM on Monday, February 16!

Rabbit SPIN Club

The Rabbit SPIN Club will be ready to start again in January! If you are interested in showing rabbits at the 4-H fair, but can't keep them, this club is for YOU! Let Marie Lindahl know if you are interested: mlndhl75@gmail.com



More 4-H photos at
extension.illinois.edu/fmpt/4-h-youth-development
scroll down to the list of photo albums



Stitch and Style Academy

wrapping up session 1 and is making plans for the next session. If you are interested in sewing, fashion, or fabric design let us know!

New 4-H Projects

Creating with Building Bricks

Llama & Alpaca

Hay

Re-Vamp of Horticulture

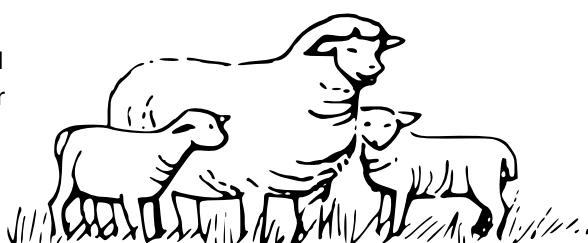
- Floral Design
- Flower Preservation
- Landscape Design
- Ornamental Display
- Plant Propagation



Sheep SPIN Club

The Sheep SPIN Club will begin meeting on Saturday, January 17, 2026! If you want to show a sheep, but don't have a place to put one, this club is for YOU! Sarah Lueschow will teach you all you need to know about the sheep industry, and showing! Fill out the form to join:

<https://forms.gle/rx4fwIKEvqHC1KMw9>



Neighbor Kids Dairy SPIN Club

Looking for a way to connect with dairy cattle, and other people who also like dairy cattle? This club is for you! The Neighbor Kids Dairy SPIN Club allows you to be able to show dairy cattle, and not have to keep them at your house! The SPIN Club meets the First Friday of each month at Linden Hill Dairy Farm! Please let Fred and Miriam know: rosenbohm07@comcast.net

Food Decorating Workshop

Learn to decorate Valentine cupcakes with long-time 4-H member Kaylee Grebner, owner of Kaylee's Country Cupcakes. Attendees will learn to decorate cupcakes with buttercream frosting with a focus on flowers. At the end of the workshop, participants will take home a package of 4 decorated Valentine themed cupcakes. This workshop is appropriate for 4-H members ages 8 to 18.

📍 Location: Fulton County Extension office - 15411 N IL 100 Hwy, Lewistown, IL

📅 Date: January 10, 2026

🕒 Time: 10 AM – 12 PM

💰 Cost: \$10

If you have any questions, please reach out to Krista Gray at the Fulton County Extension office (kristakg@illinois.edu, 309-547-3711). Registration is coming soon and will close on January 3.

Leader's Tea

The annual Leader's tea will be held on Thursday, February 5th at 6:30 PM at the Extension Office! All Leaders are invited (with invitation to follow)! This year's theme is The '80's! We are looking forward to seeing you there!

Poultry Hatch Date - Sept. 1

New for this year:

Poultry can be hatched any time after September 1!

We will now be aligned with the State Fair!

BUILDING BRICK CHALLENGE SERIES

4-Hers ages 8 and up, don't miss your chance to compete in our virtual building brick challenge series, where you can show off best original builds with plastic building bricks like LEGO and MEGABLOKS! The December contest theme is "Habitats" - small, diorama-style scenes featuring a minifigure, built on an 8x8 plate base. This is the last monthly challenge in our series this year, which celebrates the launch of our new Creating with Building Bricks 4-H project. Each month, our favorite build (based on creativity, technical skills demonstrated, and alignment to theme) will be selected as the winner in 3 different age divisions: junior (8-10 years old), intermediate (11-13 years old), and senior (14-18 years old). We'll also select one random participant submission per month to receive some swag. There is no cost to enter, but youth **MUST** be currently enrolled Illinois 4-H club members to participate. Learn more and enter on the Building Brick Challenge Series website. If you need accommodation to participate, please contact the State 4-H Office.

Winter Break Family Build

Challenge

Does your family love building and creating together? This is the opportunity for you! Create a plastic brick build as a family over winter break (December 20, 2025-January 4, 2026) and submit it to our Winter Break Family Build Challenge. Builds need to fit the theme "Winter Wonderland". One entry per family. All participating families must have at least one currently enrolled Illinois 4-H member on them. See complete rules and enter on the Building Brick Challenge Series website. If you need accommodation to participate, please contact the State 4-H Office.

Ambassador Team Applications

Starting at age 13, you can apply to represent Illinois 4-H, grow leadership skills, and meet 4-H'ers statewide. Opportunities include:

- Youth Leadership Team
- Livestock Ambassador Team
- 4-H Influencers
- Healthy Living
- Creative Cultural Arts Ambassadors
- IDEA Leaders
- Food Advocacy Team
- STEM Ambassador Team

Apply now through Dec. 31!

<https://form.jotform.com/250223621056142>

Meat Judging Series is BACK!

The Illinois Association of Meat Processors and the University of Illinois Meats Judging Team are collaborating to continue the Illinois Meats Judging Series in 2026! Mark your calendars and look for more information to come.

This is open to all FFA and 4-H Youth with locations stretched throughout the state. The goal is to increase access and opportunities to build skills in meats evaluation. Each contest will include a clinic.

Illinois Farm Bureau is sponsoring awards for the top individuals and teams in Junior and Senior Divisions at each of the events and sponsoring event banners. We hope to see you at one of the 2026 dates:

- January 24 - Raber Packing Company, West Peoria, IL
- January 31 - Eickman's Processing, Seward, IL
- February 7 - Wenneman Meat Company, St. Libory, IL
- February 14 - Slagel Meats, Forrest, IL
- March 6 - State 4-H Contest at University of Illinois (follows 4-H rules)

If you would like to be added to an email list about the events or for accommodation information, please email:

jfaber@pontiac90.org

Public Speaking Contest

The 2026 Peoria County 4-H Public Speaking Contest will be held Thursday, March 26 at 6 PM at the Peoria County Extension Office! Entries (through Fair Entry) will be due in early March!

Please consider participating in this fun contest! There are usually pretty good snacks, and we learn a ton from everyone's speeches!

Junior Leadership Conference Registration is OPEN!

The Illinois 4-H Junior Leadership Conference is a fun-filled event which provides junior high 4-H members (7th & 8th grades) a look into opportunities in Illinois 4-H and helps start their leadership journey. Members gain skills related to 4-H projects and leadership, such as communication, decision making, and teamwork while engaging in hands-on activities.

JLC will be this March 7-8 in Springfield. Log into ZSuite to register your 4-H'er!

Register closes January 1 - but spots fill up fast!

Fashion Revue at State Level

January 24, 2026

Heartland Community College, Normal
go.illinois.edu/4HFashionRevue

4-H youth will showcase their skills in clothing construction, fashion design, and personal presentation in two competition levels: Junior (ages 8 - 13) and Senior (ages 14 - 18). Through interviews with judges and a public fashion show, youth build confidence, express individuality, and foster career exploration.

Registration deadline is Dec. 5, through ZSuite. Club enrollment required.

Cake it 'Til you Make it Cake

Decorating Competition

May 7, 2026, at Bevier Hall – Food Science & Human Nutrition Food Labs, Urbana

In this high-energy, live cake decorating competition, youth will engage in a creative, hands-on experience that fosters artistic expression, builds confidence, and promotes life skills such as planning, time management, and public presentation. In two competition levels, beginner and intermediate/advanced, youth will compete in timed rounds to transform plain cakes into themed masterpieces.

<https://4h.extension.illinois.edu/events/state-events/cake-it-til-you-make-it-cake-decorating-competition>

Summer Youth Camp at 4-H Memorial Camp

Summer Youth Camp dates for 2026 at 4-H Memorial Camp in Monticello, IL are set! Early Registration for 4-H Members will be January 12-25. General Registration opens February 2nd. Camp dates and additional information is available on our website.

<https://4h.extension.illinois.edu/events/4-h-memorial-camp/4-h-summer-camp-programs/4-h-memorial-summer-camp>

Camp Counselors and Program Staff needed!

Do you want an awesome summer job that allows you to live away from home, work with your peers, and teaches some great life skills? Employment with us is all of that and more! We are looking for counselors (16+ years old by the beginning of employment) and program staff (18+ years old by beginning of employment) to help provide amazing camp experiences for our youth campers. We are accepting applications for the 2026 season now! Dates of employment, job descriptions, application link and other information is available on our website.

<https://4h.extension.illinois.edu/events/4-h-memorial-camp/employment-opportunities>

2026 4-H Reel Adventure Family Fish Camp

Family Fish camp at 4-H Memorial Camp will be May 1-3, 2026. Information about the program and registration will be available on our website.

<https://4h.extension.illinois.edu/events/4-h-memorial-camp/reel-adventure-family-fishing-camp>

Camp Corral- Summer Camp for Children of Military Families

4-H Memorial Camp in Monticello, IL is once again partnering with Camp Corral to host a 6 day/5 night summer youth camp for children ages 8-15 who have a parent or legal guardian that served in the military. Dates for 2026 are July 5-10. This program is free for participants. For more information, please visit our website.

<https://4h.extension.illinois.edu/events/4-h-memorial-camp/4-h-summer-camp-programs/camp-corral>

Fun with Food Science at Home

Come learn about food science and the food industry AND make homemade ice cream in this fun, hands-on workshop by the Chicagoland Food Science Foundation! There will be \$50 Amazon gift cards given out during the event! This counts as a state level experience for awards. You will need to gather a small list of supplies prior to the event (included in registration) if you want to follow along with the ice cream making experiment. Jan 22 6:00pm - 7:00pm

There is no age minimum for this event, but younger attendees should have an adult with them to help them navigate the webinar and hands-on experiments.

Register by noon on Wednesday, January 21. If you need reasonable accommodation to participate, please contact the State 4-H Office. Registration can be found on ZSuite!

Camp Kaleido

Join us May 9, 2026, at 4-H Memorial Camp, Monticello!

Camp Kaleido is a full-day art immersion experience where youth, ages 8-12, explore creative expression through hands-on workshops, collaborative projects, and experimentation. Led by the 4-H Creative Collective Art Ambassador Team, campers rotate through stations that highlight visual, performing, and interdisciplinary arts, each designed to spark imagination, build skills, and celebrate individuality. Lunch provided. Cost \$50. Registration opens soon!

<https://4h.extension.illinois.edu/events/state-events/camp-kaleido>

Illinois 4-H Alumni Awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the Illinois 4-H Alumni Awards and Recognition Program, including the Illinois 4-H Alumni Award, Illinois 4-H Young Alumni Award, and the Family Spirit Award. Honorees will be recognized during the Illinois State Fair, August 14-16, 2026.

- Deadline: March 15, 2026
- Learn more & submit nominations: go.illinois.edu/4halumniawards
- Watch & share the promo video

Help us celebrate outstanding Illinois 4-H alumni and families who continue to make a difference!

State Cooking Competition

To all of our young aspiring chefs: mark your calendars for Thursday, May 7th, 2026, in Champaign, Illinois for a shared statewide experience in the kitchen! Be on the lookout for more information about the event soon, and while you wait- put on your aprons and start perfecting your skills!

State Horse Judging Contest

The 2026 4-H State Horse Judging Contest is scheduled for SUNDAY, February 1 at Black Hawk East College in Galva, IL, with a 1 PM start (12:30 PM check-in). Contest rules and more details can be found on the state 4-H website. Note that this contest takes place on the Galva, IL East campus of Black Hawk College, not at Black Hawk's main campus in Moline.

4-H members are invited to learn about horses all while developing life skills such as objective reasoning, decision-making, public speaking, and teamwork at the Illinois 4-H State Horse Judging Contest. The primary objective of these contests is to provide an opportunity for youth to demonstrate their knowledge of equine-related subject matter in a competitive setting where attitudes of friendliness and fairness prevail.

In the 4-H State Horse Judging Contest youth will judge six classes of horses, at least two being halter classes. Youth 14 years of age and older may also choose to participate in oral reasons following the classes. For those not participating in the oral reasons class, one questions class will be required. Top-placing senior division youth will be invited to participate in an invitational judging contest after which the national team will be determined. This judging contest is also home to the Larry Carls Memorial Overall High Point Award which will be given to the 4-H horse judging contest participant who earns the highest % of total possible points across both contest divisions (reasons & non-reasons).

Registration Details

- Registration Deadline: January 28
- Register via ZSuite:
<https://4h.zsuite.org/event-registrations/43610>



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University of Illinois Extension

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit
Peoria County Branch Office
4810 N Sheridan RD
Peoria, IL 61614

THE CLOVER

Upcoming Peoria County 4-H Events

December

24-1/5 | Office Closed

January

- 2 | Dairy SPIN Club Meeting
- 6 | Livestock Judging
- 8 | Federation
- 10 | Stitch and Style Graduation
- 13 | Livestock Judging
- 14 | Stitch and Style
- 24 | State Fashion Review
- 31 | T-Shirt Quilting Workshop in Knox County

February

- 3 | Livestock Judging
- 4 | Stitch and Style
- 5 | Federation Leader's Tea
- 6 | Dairy SPIN Club Meeting
- 7 | Beef Weigh In
- 14 | T-shirt Quilting Workshop in Knox County
- 16 | Livestock Day
- 26 | Auction Committee Meeting

March

- 2 | Foundation Meeting
- 3 | Livestock Judging
- 4 | Stitch and Style
- 5 | Public Speaking Entries Due
- 5 | Federation
- 6 | Dairy SPIN Club Meeting
- 26 | Public Speaking Contest

Look inside to
learn more!