



Youth involvement in archery

Thriving Youth

Thriving youth are the core of healthy, robust communities. Illinois Extension's mentorship-based youth development model focuses on social competence, academic success, career development, and community connection. The 4-H experience creates opportunities and environments for all youth to thrive now and in the future.

Youth thrive when they are engaged in activities and have opportunities to interact with their peers. Whiteside County 4-H recruited passionate volunteers to provide a special interest club focused on skill development, mastery, and friendship. Shooting sports volunteers Nathan Eggers, Teresa Galloway, Chris Yaun, and Lucas Bush started an archery special interest club in Whiteside County. They actively encouraged youth to join the club. Following all state safety guidelines, the club teaches responsibility and archery safety, as well as provides opportunities to make new friends. During club sessions, 4-H families stay and watch their child, truly making the archery club a family affair.

For the past two years, despite the pandemic, the archery club remained strong. The Whiteside Extension office in Sterling proved to be an excellent location for archery as it provides both indoor and outdoor shooting space. Participants shoot in both areas, making the club a year-round activity for youth ages 8 to 18. Many participants enjoyed the club so much that they put bow and arrows on their Christmas lists. Youth look forward to the archery club each month and learn something new at each session.

Youth report that shooting sports programs provide growth in decision making, teamwork, self-discipline, self-confidence, and problem solving while they learn the highest standards of safety, sportsmanship, and ethical behavior. The program also builds an understanding and appreciation of natural resources,

leadership abilities, and positive relationships with peers and adult mentors.

Thanks to dedicated volunteers, supportive families, and enthusiastic youth, the archery club not only develops archery skills, but also encourages and enhances friendships!



go.illinois.edu/4HShootingSports

Cloverbuds Can encourages learning for youth 5 to 7 years of age

Research states that 80% of lifespan learning occurs before the age of 8. Children ages 5-7 have a unique opportunity to engage in an exploratory 4-H program that meets kids' developmental needs through creativity and play in the 4-H Cloverbud program. Cloverbud clubs may be independent clubs or they may meet at the same time as a 4-H multi-project club with a special time set aside just for Cloverbuds. When the world was stuck at home, it was difficult for youth to connect with fun learning activities outside of school. In response to this need, Carroll-Lee-Whiteside Extension invited youth to participate in Cloverbuds Can, a virtual Cloverbud club.

Starting in January, nine families enrolled in the club and met seven times, exploring a new topic each time. Families received a supply kit with everything they needed to explore 4-H and interact with one another. Through games, scavenger hunts, and activities, youth were able to try on different hats, even becoming paleontologists by excavating dinosaur "fossils." By the end of the final club session, everyone knew the words to the 4-H Pledge and had a sense of camaraderie, community, curiosity to continue trying new things, including a love of scavenger hunts. Signing off of Zoom for the last time, families, youth, and Extension staff were sad the experience was over.

Through pivoting to a digital format, Cloverbuds **can** learn, play, experience, and grow!