



4-H Exploration Days

June 20 to 22, 2012 (43rd year)

Audience

This program is for youth ages 11-19. The 2012 attendance totaled 2,466 youth, chaperones and resource people from 82 Michigan counties plus guests from Belize. This count includes 648 youth males and 1,267 youth females; 14.1% 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. Nearly 200 action-filled classroom and field trip sessions were offered throughout the MSU campus and at various off-campus locations. Sessions were taught by 317 content and youth development experts (81 MSU faculty/staff, 153 adult volunteers, 18 teen volunteers, and 65 outside resource people). A wide variety of session content areas are available each year such as Animal & Veterinary Science, Business & Entrepreneurship, Communications, Environmental & Outdoor Education, Food, Nutrition & Fitness, 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 approximately 20,000 hours of their time teaching and supporting youth to ensure a successful conference!

Outcomes

2012 survey results showed the program increased participants' interest in and readiness for college:

97.4% plan to attend college.

4% indicated before the program that they did not plan to attend college, however, 53% of these students reported after attending that the program got them excited to go to college.

88.1% said the program better prepared them for college.

77.5% are interested in attending MSU.

Of those who want to attend MSU, 84% said Exploration Days increased their knowledge of different majors, careers, and opportunities at MSU.

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

93.2% Time management

93.1% Socializing and making new friends

92.6% Accepting people who are different from them

92.5% Adapting to new living arrangements

92.3% Making decisions/choices

91.8% Ability to follow through and complete tasks

91.0% Communication

91.0% Being independent

Participants rated the following as top program highlights:

69.5% Being with friends

59.3% Meeting new people

58.1% Educational sessions

Sample participant testimonials:

- 4-H Exploration Days has helped me get a taste of what college life is like and the independence, responsibility, and need for good choices that comes with it.
- It's helped me develop confidence and social skills through situations I wouldn't typically be in.
- It's exposed me to career choices I didn't know exist!
- It's helped me become more accepting of different people/ethnicities.

Additional Significant Information

4-H Exploration Days participants from the classes of 2009 to 2011 are currently attending college at a 77% higher rate than their Michigan same-age peers. Michigan 4-H college attendance data that includes the class of 2012 will be available by late November 2012.

Contact Information

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