



# CASCADE COUNTY 4-H CLOVER CONNECTION



## February 2026

### Thank You!

Thank you to the following people and businesses who donated to the Cascade County 4-H Program over the last month!



Taylors AutoMax



TyAnn McGinnis

Walter & Vicki Johnson



**Huge shout out to North 40 for being an incredible community partner this year! Thank you for allowing our advanced archery group to participate in special classes and for all the support you've given our youth. We truly appreciate everything you've done to help this program grow**



### 4-H Volunteers

Do you know someone that would like to help with project areas of 4-H? Our county is always looking for new volunteers. Please have them contact Jenn at [jennifer.volkmar@montana.edu](mailto:jennifer.volkmar@montana.edu)

### Office Closure

The Extension Office will be closed on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026 for Presidents Day

### Montana 4-H Leadership Academy

#### 4-H members 12+

Join the Montana 4-H Leadership Academy workshop on Sunday afternoons in 2025-2026 4-H year.

The leadership academy is a network of Montana 4-H members interested in exploring and developing their own leadership skills while serving their county 4-H program in new ways.

Each month the officer team members will present a different workshop topic that they have found to be important as they have grown their own leadership abilities. This workshop should be paired with a local county leadership meeting to work on county projects that serve the local 4-H program and community.

Sunday FEBRUARY 15 at 6:00 PM is the next session.

## **Did you know?**

### **Experiential Learning**

The Experiential Learning Model 4-H uses the Experiential Learning Model as a foundation for teaching youth essential life skills. The model was developed based on the work of John Dewey and David Kolb and is a learner-centered approach that promotes “learning by doing.” 4-H upholds a long-lasting tradition of engaging youth in hands-on activities that encourage open-ended learning, problem solving and collaboration with their peers. This is because research and experience consistently show that youth learn better, retain knowledge longer and develop a deeper understanding when they are involved in real-world situations that are paired with reflection and application. The model follows five connected steps: Do, Reflect, Generalize, Apply, and Evaluate. Youth first engage in an activity, then reflect on what happened and why it matters. Then they connect the experience to larger ideas and real-life situations, apply newly learned skills to other situations, and assess their learning. The model ensures that learning goes beyond fun, allowing youth to apply life skills beyond a club meeting, camp, or project. After completing the entire model, youth start applying the skills to school, home, their community and their world. The Experiential Learning Model is also important for volunteers and educators. **continued...**

### **...Did you know continued...**

It provides an outline that shifts teaching from talking to coaching. When an adult acts as a coach, stronger relationships are built, providing an opportunity for youth to create a relationship with a caring adult in their lives. The model also fosters peer learning, teamwork and confidence in youth. By blending a hands-on experience and thoughtful reflection, the 4-H Experiential Learning Model transforms activities into meaningful learning that prepares young people for life; prepares youth to be Beyond Ready.

### **4-H Camp Junior Director Applications Open till February 9th**

Applications for Camp Junior Director (JD) positions will open on January 9 and close on February 9 for camp taking place June 6–10. This year, Cascade County Junior Directors will partner with Teton County to create a larger, collaborative camp experience with JD teams from both counties. Applicants must meet all eligibility requirements, including being 13 years old by October 1, 2025, to apply. Priority will be given to youth who demonstrate leadership through participation in multiple leadership activities and home leadership roles at the county and/or state level, not solely within their club. A \$25 application fee is required. Please watch for the application email—it will be coming out soon!

## February Project Day



The Feb 14<sup>th</sup> Project Day will be held at the MSU Extension Office from 9am-12pm. Please make sure to pay attention to workshop times so you do not double book your child when you sign up on Z Suite. Sign up opens January 1st and closes **Thursday February 12th**

Remember to sign in for club points.

**Cloverbuds are only allowed to participate in the Cloverbud Workshop and need to make sure they come for only this session.**

Youth do not need to be enrolled in the project to participate in the Project Day workshop. This month will feature two options for clover buds to participate with.

## Cascade County 4-H Teen Night

A big shout out to everyone who came to Teen Night. We love seeing our Big Sky Explorer Leader Brittney Asmussen and her husband for stepping up and appreciate using the office space to make these gathering happen. Mark your calendars, March 13<sup>th</sup> is the next one! Thank you to Leaders Council for buying Pizza!

## Focused Project Days

We would like to know if you are interested in doing extra Project Days focused on a specific project. We are currently piloting a program of trying them on a Friday for those who don't go to school on Fridays to participate. If you want to participate, but Friday doesn't work, let us know! If you are interested in participating in a focused project day or are interested in putting one on for a specific project, please contact Jenn at [jennifer.volkmar@montana.edu](mailto:jennifer.volkmar@montana.edu). This is a great opportunity for teen leaders to practice their leadership skills and for any member to fulfill a Learning Experience requirement for record books.

## Chatcolab

Registration for *Chatcolab 2026: One Sky, Many Stars* is now open.



Held from 1pm on Sunday, June 15 through 9am on Friday, June 20, 2025. It's time to return to Summer Camp - but not just any summer camp - **Chatcolab** - an Experiential learning experience for all ages that has been around since 1948! <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfxaeTNdqfVLbU0vIpGQ01aPYy8wBGlcWYf61tiu8L-W7FDwA/viewform>

Assistance and funding for this camp is available through the 4-H Foundation.

## What's Up with 4-H

Let us know what you are doing in 4-H in Cascade County!

We would love to have you submit photos and/or blurbs from and about events and activities you're participating in or updates on your projects throughout the year. Show off your skills and tell us what you love about what you're doing in 4-H!

### Project Reminders

Remember to review the updates in the rule books if you are in Horse, Livestock, or Shooting Sports projects. There are deadlines and requirements that you will need to fulfill for the project. If you have questions, please reach out to that committee.

The add/drop date for all projects is May 1<sup>st</sup>. You will need to go into your household profile on ZSuite to add or drop projects. If you have problems, contact the office for help on the process. No changes can be made after May 1<sup>st</sup>. If you feel you won't be able to complete all your projects, please make sure you drop them by this date as it affects qualifications for awards and scholarships.

### Reminder to Volunteers and Leaders:

In order to vote as a committee member, you must have your enrollment fully completed in Zsuites. This includes having your payment submitted, background checks cleared, and all required waivers signed.

Please make sure these steps are completed to ensure your eligibility to participate in voting.

## Montana 4-H Congress

For the speech and demonstration competitions in this county, 13 and older youth must first compete at the county level. If they receive a blue ribbon at county, they are then eligible to advance and sign up for the state-level competition at Congress. Congress this year will take place July 7-10 (Pre-Congress will be July 5-7<sup>th</sup>) the cost is \$265.00 per person this includes meals, lodging, speakers and activities along with a T-shirt.

Clover Buds may present and receive participation but not compete for placings at the county level.

### Montana Congress Contests include:

Career Communications

Demonstrations and/or Illustrated Talk

Fashion Revue

Gavel Games (Parliamentary Procedure)

Horse Judging

Horse Hippology (Horse Skill-a-Thon)

Livestock Judging

Public Speaking

Quilt Contest

Stir-Up (foods)

Video

### Shooting Sports 10 Gun Raffle Fundraiser

Cascade 4-H Shooting Sports is doing a 10 gun raffle fundraiser to support the Shooting Sports program. Tickets are on sale now. They are \$20 per ticket with a 1:1000 chance of winning. Tickets will be drawn March 2-5. If you would like tickets, contact a shooting sports member. For any question, or if you want a ticket but don't know any members, contact the Shooting Sports Committee at [cascadecoshootingsports@gmail.com](mailto:cascadecoshootingsports@gmail.com).

## Youth 4-H International Exchange Programs

We are excited to offer several stunning worldwide programs that can bring your 4-H youth across the globe!

- 2026 Outbound Program
  - Taiwan
  - Korea
  - Japan
    - 4-week
    - 8-week
  - Argentina
  - Costa Rica
- Inbound and Academic Year
  - July 22- August 17
    - 20 Japanese IB delegates 18 Youth (ages 12-18) & 2 adult chaperones
  - 26-27 Academic School Year August – June
    - 1-2 Japanese or South Korean High school-aged students

## Rec Lab Dates

MARCH 27-29, 2026 | COLUMBUS, MT



Rec Lab will be March 27-29 in Columbus, MT. This year's theme: "4-H Escape: Do You Have the Skills to Unlock Your Potential?"

Registration will be available soon on ZSuite Events.

## Cascade Communications Contest

The annual competition will be held the March 14<sup>th</sup> Signups in ZSuites will start February 20<sup>th</sup> and run through March 9th.

## Shooting Sports Competitions

- Red Lodge 2/1/2026 Carbon County Archery Shoot
- Shelby 2/1/2026 SHELBY-MARIAS FAIR INVITATIONAL
- Baker 2/6/2026 – 2/7/2026 Fallon County Inv. - **Cancelled**
- Conrad 2/7/2026 2026 Pondera County Invitational/Postal
- Ronan 2/14/2026 Fred Grant Memorial Invitational - **Cancelled**
- Dillon 2/21/2026 Beaverhead County Invitational
- Great Falls 2/21/2026 Cascade County Invitational
- Fort Benton 2/28/2026 Chouteau County Archery Inv.
- Billings 2/21/2026 Yellowstone County 4-H Invitational
- Superior 2/28/2026 Mineral County Archery Shoot
- Broadus 2/28/2026 Broadus Sharp Shooters Invitational – Archery
- Bozeman 3/6/2026 – 3/8/2026 State Shooting Sports Inv.
- Ennis 3/14/2026 – 3/15/2026 Ennis Archery Shoot
- Missoula 3/28/2026 Missoula County 4-H Archery Invitational

If you're interested in being a Shooting Sports Instructor, please contact Samaria Kirby at [cascadecoshootingsports@gmail.com](mailto:cascadecoshootingsports@gmail.com).

# 4-H Project & Member Spotlights

## 4-H Healthy Habits

### What is 4-H Healthy Habits?

The Healthy Habits program uses a four-pronged approach to strategically leverage the 4-H system to address food access, nutrition and health equity for underserved youth and families across the country:

- Deploys university-backed, impactful programming.
- Reaches diverse audiences through local partnerships.
- Engages youth voice for more impactful delivery and clear messaging.
- Provides a system of sustainability to enable continued impact for underserved youth and their families in urban and rural communities.



## 4-H Civic Engagement Programs

4-H civic engagement programs empower young people to be well-informed citizens who are actively engaged in their communities and the world. Youth learn about civic affairs, build decision-making skills and develop a sense of understanding and confidence in relating and connecting to other people.

### Leadership & personal development

4-H is an innovator in developing youth leadership and decision-making skills to prepare young people for the future. Our civic engagement programs engage youth in programs, organizations, and communities where they share a voice, influence, and decision-making authority. 4-H civic engagement programs equip young people with confidence and leadership skills to be leaders today and tomorrow.

## Member Spotlight: Tristen Short

Throughout the year, we'll be highlighting and celebrating our members in the newsletter! This is a great way to get to know each other, share experiences, and showcase the wonderful people who make our program strong. Be on the lookout for upcoming spotlights. This month our Member Spotlight is Kinlee Loch from the 468 Club!

**Q: How long have you been involved in 4-H?**

**A:** 6 years

**Q: What inspired you to join?**

**A:** Find new leadership role opportunities.

**Q: Advise he would give:**

**A:** I would say to get involved with all things 4-H not just one subject area.

**Q: Interests or hobbies outside of 4-H:**

**A:** Outside of 4-H I am involved with BPA work and church activities

**Q: A fun fact about you (something people may not know):**

**A:** I have been to six countries

**Q: Your favorite memory or experience so far:**

**A:** The IGNITE conference in DC last year.

# Financial Opportunities & Updates

## Farm Service Agency (FSA) Youth Loans

FSA makes loans to individual young persons to start and operate income-producing projects of modest size in connection with their participation in 4-H, FFA, tribal youth group, or similar agricultural youth organization. The project being financed with an FSA Youth Loan needs to provide an opportunity for the young person to acquire experience and education in agriculture-related skills. Call the Great Falls FSA office at (406) 727-7580 for more information.

## Montana Department of Agriculture Junior Agriculture Loans

The Montana Junior Agriculture Loan Program was developed to assist and encourage members of agricultural youth organizations in financing agricultural projects. Projects can involve crop and livestock production, custom farming, marketing and distribution, processing, and other financially feasible activities. Loans are made from the assets of the Agricultural Finance Program. Program support and technical assistance are provided by the MSU Extension Service, Montana agricultural educators, and private financial institutions. Visit <https://agr.mt.gov/Topics/E-G/Grants-Pages/Junior-Agriculture-Loans> for more information.



A "My 4-H Loan" is the perfect answer to help with your operating expenses.

Minimum Loan Amount - \$100.00  
Maximum Loan Amount - \$4,000.00  
Maximum Repayment Term - 12 Months  
Minimum Monthly Payment Amount - \$25.00<sup>a</sup>

**Call Us or Stop In. We're Here to Help!**

<sup>a</sup>If the loan is not paid in full within the 12 Month Term, a balloon payment will be required to pay the remaining balance.  
<sup>b</sup>Requires a qualified joint owner for 17 and under years.



## Russell Country Federal Credit Union

Russell Country Federal Credit has developed a program to assist youth and young adults from 8-19 years of age, who are actively participating in 4-H to learn financial responsibility and good saving habits. Visit <https://www.russellcountryfcu.org/4-h-suite/> for more information.

## Montana Farmers Union 4-H Sentence Grant

Montana Farmers Union is awarding \$100 grants to 4-H clubs to further their project work. All you need to do is submit one sentence on how you would use the funds! Apply at [montanafarmersunion.com](http://montanafarmersunion.com)

## **Cascade 4-H Foundation Scholarship**

The Cascade 4-H Foundation Scholarship opened January 1, 2026.

At the heart of 4-H is a commitment to learning, leadership and service. To help promote those endeavors, Cascade 4-H Foundation supports scholarships to provide financial assistance to Cascade County 4-H members to pursue post-secondary education.

Up to seven scholarships of \$500.00 each shall be awarded with priority given to first time applicants.

The scholarship money awarded to repeat recipients will be up to \$1,000, allocating the proceeds equitably if less people apply than what has been budgeted for.

You can apply on ZSuite or by email. All applications must be received in full by March 31 or the following business day if the 31st falls on a weekend or holiday.

Applications consist of:

**APPLICATION:** Completed application, limiting essay questions to 300 words.

**TWO LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION:** Two letters of recommendation, preferably one from a 4-H volunteer.

**CURRENT TRANSCRIPT:** A current high school or post-secondary transcript must be provided.

## **MSG 2026 Scholarship Deadline is 5/01/2026**

Details available at the Extension office if you are interested.

## **Montana 4-H Foundation Grants**

The Montana 4-H Foundation supports 4-H initiatives that focus on healthy living, citizenship, leadership, science, engineering, and technology. The mission of the Montana 4-H Foundation is to "help 4-H youth by raising private funds, managing financial resources and partnering with the MSU Extension Service to fund educational opportunities for Montana 4-H youth, volunteer leaders, and staff."

Montana 4-H grants provide opportunities for youth and adults to strengthen their skills and maximize their positive impacts on the communities in which they live.

### Grants - MONTANA 4-H FOUNDATION

## **People Partner Grants - Montana 4-H Foundation**

Eligibility for People Partner Grants

- Youth should be involved in determining, planning, conducting, and evaluating the project.
- Project will make it possible for individuals involved to accomplish something educational and worthwhile that helps the target audience reach a higher quality of life.
- There is community support and acceptance of the project, as evidence by "partners" listed in the grant application, additional funding sources, and resource persons and agencies involved.
- The project has lasting benefits.

Applications are open!

Apply online at:

<https://www.mt4hfoundation.org/grants.html>

# Meetings & Important Notices

## Horse Leaders Meeting



The next meeting of the Cascade County 4-H Horse Leaders will be on Tuesday,

February 3rd at 5:30 pm at the Extension Office.

## Shooting Sports Leaders Meeting



The next meeting of the Cascade County 4-H Shooting Sports Leaders Committee will be held on

Tuesday June 4th, at 6:00pm at the Extension Office.

## Leaders' Council Meeting



The next meeting of the Cascade County 4-H Leaders' Council will be on

Tuesday, March 10th at 6:00 pm at the Extension Office.

## Foundation Meeting



The next meeting of the Cascade County 4-H Foundation will be on

Tuesday, February 10th at 6:00pm at the Extension office.

## Livestock Leaders Meeting

The next meeting of the Cascade County 4-H Livestock Leaders will be on



Tuesday, February 3rd at 7:00 pm at the Extension Office.

**All meetings will also be virtual via WebEx. Please check your email for the links and meeting packets.**

## Important Dates

### February

- 3 - Horse meeting 5:30 pm
- 3 - Livestock Meeting 7:00 pm
- 9 - JD applications due
- 10 - Foundations Meeting 6:00 pm
- 14 - Project Day
- 21 - Shooting Sports Tournament

### March

- 2 - Horse meeting 5:30 pm
- 2 - Livestock meeting 7:00pm
- 14 - Project Day
- 14 - Communications Contest

Or

## Organization Leaders:

If your club offers online links to your meetings please send them to the office as we can pass on to those who can not make in person.

## Family Reminders:

All activity and events fees must be paid in advance in order to participate in Cascade County events. These costs allow us to reserve spaces, plan materials and support county programming. Please make sure your payments are completed ahead of time so we can continue offering great opportunities for our members. Thank you for helping us keep things running smoothly and timely. Some events you can pay online for other items you will need exact cash or check when paying at the extension office.