



UW-MADISON EXTENSION

MONROE COUNTY 4-H CLOVERLINK

THE NEWSLETTER FOR 4-H FAMILIES & FRIENDS

Monroe County Extension Office, 206 South K St, Sparta, WI 54656

Phone: (608) 269-8722

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Dec. 2025 / Jan. 2026

CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Season's Greetings, Monroe County 4-H Families,

As enrollment season winds down, we're excited to welcome all our new 4-H families, cloverbuds, and members! We hope each of you has a wonderful year ahead, full of learning, friendships, and memorable 4-H experiences. Welcome to our growing 4-H community!

Monroe County is off to a strong start with 59 cloverbuds, 229 members, 16 junior leaders, and 59 approved volunteers. Your enthusiasm gives us great momentum as we look forward to an exciting year of club happenings and county events.

A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who joined us for the Family Celebration and contributed to the amazing potluck spread. It was a fantastic turnout, and we're grateful for the sense of community you help create. To our new families and those with schedule conflicts—we hope to see you there next year!

Congratulations to our Special & Top Award Recipients from the Family Celebration:

- **Volunteer Award:** Jennifer Bailey (Valle Ville)
- **Alumni Award:** Josh Goede (Junior Leaders)
- **Friend of 4-H Award:** Kristi Schlafer (Food Stand Manager)
- **Key Award Winners:** Braden Pederson (Leon Livewires), Nyla Dilley (Leon Livewires), and Ashley Jaeger (Denim 'n Dust).
- **I Dare You Awards:** Alivia Paulson (Leon Livewires), Mavrick Flock (Leon Livewires), and Hannah Chambers (Norwalk Clovers).
- **Treasurer's Book Top Awards:** Linus Arndt (Norwalk Clovers), and Carter Ollendick (LaGrange Tunnel-Lites).
- **Secretary's Book Top Awards:** Azaria Carpenter (Norwalk Clovers), and Brinley Mlsna (Leon Livewires).
- **Senior Record Book Top Awards:** Aubri Schaldach (Jolly Joiners), and Karlee Bailey (Valle Ville).
- **Intermediate Record Books Top Awards:** Linus Arndt (Norwalk Clovers), and Maci Weiker (Leon Livewires).
- **Junior Record Books Top Awards:** Isaac Wells (Leon Livewires), and Audrey Wells (Leon Livewires).

Outstanding work to all our award recipients! If you were unable to attend the banquet, your awards are available for pick-up at the Extension Office.

We're also proud to share that 47 Record Books were submitted this year—a wonderful accomplishment. Thank you to every member who took the time to reflect on and document their 4-H journey. We strongly encourage all members to participate next year!

As we look ahead to a new year, we'd like to share two of our county goals:

1) Increase participation in state and national leadership opportunities. Even attending one event can open new doors for our youth. We know the cost associated with these events are increasing, but there are scholarships available through the state and county if you plan ahead. Please reach out to discuss leadership opportunities.

2) Boost college and career readiness skills. As clubs plan events, consider ways to tie activities to real-world learning. If you have a career skill to share, a business available for a tour, or a connection to local higher education opportunities, we'd love to collaborate.

We wish all families a safe, joyful, and refreshing holiday season. Enjoy time with loved ones and the fun upcoming activities with your clubs. Here's to a bright and inspiring year ahead in 4-H

Happy Holidays,

Jason & Vicki

Monroe County Extension Staff



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FRIENDLY REMINDERS

- Monthly 4-H Newsletter information is due on the **20th**.
- Please keep your mailing and email addresses current in 4-H Online.
- If you plan to un-enroll from 4-H, please contact the office so we can remove you from the system.



If your club or group has events you would like on this calendar, please email information to

Jason.hornickel@wisc.edu

Calendar of Events

DECEMBER

Sat., Dec. 13, 2025

Jr. Leaders Help at Rotary Lights, 7 p.m.

WHERE: Evans-Bosshard Park



Wed., Dec. 24 & 25, 2025

Merry Christmas! Office is closed

Mon., Dec. 29, 2025

Project Day, 11:30 am (register) 12- 4 p.m.

WHERE: Leon Community Center

Mon. Dec. 29, 2025

Leader's Required Training, 4:30 p.m.

WHERE: Leon Community Center

JANUARY

Thurs., Jan. 1, 2026

Jr. Leaders Ice Skating, 10 am-Noon

WHERE: Sparta Hockey Rink



Thurs., Jan. 1, 2026

Happy New Year! Office is closed

Jr. Leaders Upcoming Events

Jr. Leaders will be helping with the lights again this year at the Evans-Bosshard Park on Saturday, December 13th at 7 p.m. Dress for the weather and plan to meet at the park.

We will be skating into the new year with an open skate on January 1, 2026 from 10 a.m. to noon. at the Sparta Hockey Rink. The rink has skates to borrow if needed. Lunch will be pizza and a dessert.

Let's party! A JL Holiday Party at the Extension office is planned for Friday, January 9th. Officers, please plan to be there at 6 p.m., all others are welcome at 6:30 p.m.

Looking ahead into February, we're planning on tubing if the weather cooperates. Date and location TBD.

To attend any of the above listed events, please register at: <https://forms.gle/c5td5kHeuQSUtGn97>



2025 - 2026 District Responsibilities

Northeast: Clovers & Cranberries; Valle Ville;
La Grange Tunnel-Lites

Family Celebration
Clean Food Stand After County Fair

Northwest: Denim N' Dust; Dragonflies, Sparta
Sprockets

Clean Food Stand Before Tractor Pull

Southeast: Hill-N-Valley; Norwalk Clovers;
Stepping Stones

Clean Food Stand After Tractor Pull

Southwest: Jolly Joiners; Leon Livewires

Clean Exhibit Hall Before County Fair

WISCONSIN 4-H THRIVING SURVEY

Due: December 5

Parents/Guardians of youth ages 13–19:
Please keep an eye on your email for instructions
and access to the upcoming survey



UW-MADISON EXTENSION

Design by: Jordan Blue, Chippewa County 4-H Program Educator

Want a chance to win a \$25 gift card? Complete the survey to enter!

Thriving Evaluation Survey

The WI 4-H program is collecting feedback through the 4-H Thriving Survey from members aged 13 and older about their 4-H experiences. Your child's feedback is invaluable to us! The survey link was sent to your family email. If you can't find it, please check your junk email folder. The survey takes just 10-15 minutes to complete, and all responses will remain anonymous.

This feedback will help us understand the impact of our 4-H program and how we can continue to improve. Upon completion, youth will be entered into a drawing to win a \$25 gift card.



**LET'S MAKE
SOME MAGIC!**

**WINTER
PROJECT DAY**

**DECEMBER
29**

NOON TO 4 PM

**LEON COMMUNITY
CENTER**

ACTIVITIES

PHOTOGRAPHY, SEWING,
STEM EXPERIMENT, TIN-
PUNCH CRAFT, TRIVIT
MAKING, FOOD PROJECT



COST

**\$10 PER MEMBER
\$15 PER
COMMUNITY
MEMBER**

Sign up by Dec. 19th

<https://forms.gle/utsqeqHUGWcBo5r68>

Family Celebration Pictures

It was a beautiful day to celebrate all the members success and recognize all the leaders contributions this past year. Thanks to Azaria Carpenter for being our photographer. Here are a few pictures from the event.



Flag Pledges



Cloverbuds



Emcees



Outstanding Junior Record Books



Outstanding Intermediate Record Books



Outstanding Senior Record Books



Top Record Books



I Dare You Award



Key Award



Top Secretary Books

National Events & Opportunities

2026 American Spirit Experience

Are you a 4-H member in grades 8-10 who loves history, travel and making new friends? If so, then this experience might be the perfect adventure for you!

The American Spirit Experience empowers youth to take ownership of their learning and leadership through a 10-day educational journey exploring history, culture, and civic identity across the East Coast and Canada. While staff and volunteers support and facilitate the experience, youth are at the center, not just as participants, but as leaders, learners, and changemakers.

The 2026 travel dates are June 18-29, 2026 or July 3-12, 2026. Application opens in 4HOnline November 1-30, 2025. Youth and parent must complete the application together since there are questions for both to answer. Estimated cost is \$3,000. You will be contacted if you are chosen to participate.

2026 Space Camp



This is an opportunity for youth in grades 6-8 to explore interests like STEM, aerospace, careers in space, and more! Youth will get hands on experiences on space simulators, be able to build their own rocket, and participate in a simulated space walk mission.

The 2026 travel date is April 23-27, 2026, to Huntsville, Alabama. Application opens in 4HOnline from November 15-December 15. The cost is \$1,300 per participant.

2026 Citizen Washington Focus—Ignite

A week long citizenship and leadership experience. 4-H members from all over the country will stay in Washington D.C. and learn about the roles of Senators and Representatives and how these parts work together to form an effective Congress.



Members in grades 10-12 are available to participate. Application is through 4HOnline. Travel dates for this trip are March 24-29, 2026 with an estimated cost of \$2,800 per participant.

Monroe County 4-H Festival of Arts

Saturday, February 28th, 2026

Cashton High School



PURPOSE of the 4-H Festival of Arts is to provide the opportunity:

- For 4-H members and Cloverbuds to share their skills and talents with others.
- For 4-H members and Cloverbuds to further develop their skills in communicating through the arts with constructive feedback on their efforts.
- To share with the public the Arts and Communication Projects of the Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development program.
- To discover additional arts ideas from others in the area.
- To observe and support others as they perform or display their talents.

Area of entry include:

• COMMUNICATION ARTS

- Memorized Selection
- Story Telling
- Play Reading
- Original Speech
- Prose Reading
- Poetry Reading

• ARTS AND CRAFTS, PHOTOGRAPHY, MARKETING

- Registrations should be sent directly to Club Leader

• DEMONSTRATION, ILLUSTRATED TALK, ACTION CENTER

- Individual
- Team

• MUSIC

- Solo
- Duet
- Group

• DRAMA

- Group Drama
- Group Play Reading
- Mini-Drama (verbal or non-verbal)

**ONLY PERFORMING ARTS PARTICIPANTS
NEED TO REGISTER ONLINE AT:**

<https://forms.gle/ZCapppDH9p7kXH22A>

Arts, Crafts, Marketing & Photography – let your Club Leader know how many items you plan on displaying

*Plan to join us to
showcase your
skills and talents!*

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL AREAS

1. Participants will introduce themselves to the judges before performing. Include your name, age or grade, name of 4-H club, title of performance. You may include an interesting fact, or something unique about your performance.
2. Throughout the program, participants and others will not leave or enter the auditorium while a group or individual is performing.
3. Please respect the time guidelines in each category.
4. Please respect the scheduled performance times. Groups are expected to perform at scheduled times.
5. All festival participants must be enrolled 4-H members.
6. All participants will be awarded a ribbon.
7. Merit winners will receive a merit ribbon. Merit awards will be based on quality of the performance/exhibit and age of participant. Only those who follow the guidelines will be eligible for merit awards.
8. When selecting material for presentations, please keep in mind that 4-H is a family organization. Presentations should be appropriate for audiences of all ages.
9. Performances will take place on the stage. Performers will use a microphone. The following will be available for use: piano, music stand, chair(s), sound system, demonstration table with mirror.

COMMUNICATION ARTS



Description - The following categories must have 1 or 2 readers.

Memorized Selection: Prose, poetry or any other piece; must be memorized. No notes allowed.

Prose-reading: include stories, narratives, anything not written as a poem; should be presented as a reading. No props.

Poetry-reading: may be original poem or a selection written by someone else, either in verse form or open-ended; should be presented as a reading. No props.

Original Speeches: A speech written by the speaker on any subject, preferably one pertaining to his/her 4-H project work. Notes permitted.

Storytelling: Original or from a book, told as if to younger children. No poetry allowed. Presented without using a book or notes; costumes or props are encouraged, and facial expression and gestures are allowed.

Play Reading: 1 or 2 readers are to make their selection “come alive” without the use of costumes and props. Hand movements and facial expressions acceptable; movement around stage unacceptable. A play reading should be presented as a reading.

Time Guidelines - Maximum time for above categories: 5 minutes.

DEMONSTRATIONS, ILLUSTRATED TALKS

Description - May be individual or in teams.

Demonstrations and Illustrated Talks: either teach someone how or show and tell how to do something.

- Consists of 4 parts - a) introduction, b) body, c) conclusion, and d) questions from audience.
- Visuals such as maps, charts, posters, graphs, pictures, slides or models can be used to explain what you're saying.

Action Center (informal): a show and tell with an emphasis on showing.

- Presenter(s) carry on conversation with passersby (no seated audience)
- People watching take part by - a) watching and listening, b) talking with demonstrator, c) trying things with senses, d) judging things, e) asking questions
- Handouts may be used (instructions, directions, recipes)
- Posters or pictures can be used to show key steps or to show a close-up view.

Time Guidelines: 15 minute maximum for demonstrations; b) 15-30 minutes for action center.

MUSIC: SOLO, DUET and GROUP

Description - Define Group - three or more members.

- Categories include instrumental, vocal, dance or novelty (e.g. variety, lip sync).
- Lip sync will be judged separately from dance, vocal, etc.
- If media accompaniments are used, only instrumental accompaniment media are permitted. Vocal media will be allowed for lip sync or dance numbers only.
- No open flames, hay, straw, cornstalks, shavings or sawdust may be used.
- No directing is permitted from the audience or in front of the stage.

Time Guidelines - The maximum performance time limit is 12 minutes. Clock starts at beginning of performance. No minimum time limit.



GROUP DRAMA

Description - Groups must consist of three or more members.

- One Act Play, commercial or original drama.
- No open flames, hay, straw, cornstalks, shavings or sawdust may be used.
- No directing is permitted from the audience or in front of the stage.

Time Guidelines - The maximum performance time limit is 30 minutes: opening curtain to final curtain. No minimum time limits.



GROUP MINI-DRAMA

Description - Groups must consist of three or more members.

- Produced with minimal props (no special lighting, hay, straw, candles or open flames) and costumes. Examples include skits, puppetry, or creative dramatics, verbal or non-verbal.

Time Guidelines - A maximum time limit of 5 minutes, including set-up and take down.

GROUP PLAY READING

Description - Groups must consist of three or more members.

- Readers are to make their selection “come alive” without the use of costumes and props.
- Hand movements and facial expressions are acceptable. Movement around the performance area is not acceptable.
- Presented without a microphone or artificial devices.
- Scripts are to be used.

Time Guidelines - Maximum time limit of 12 minutes.



ARTS & CRAFTS

Description - Youth may bring a maximum of 4 items to display and discuss.

- Please call Club Leader to reserve space for exhibits. Club Leaders are responsible to reserve space for the entire club. You do not need to register online.
- Any article that has been made after April 1 of the previous year will be accepted.
- All articles will be judged by face-to-face judging. Items will be released after the awards program. Exhibitors are responsible for the removal of their exhibits.
- Evaluation - Articles will be evaluated on quality of exhibit, age of participant and answers to interview questions. Evaluation criteria include: 1) originality / creativity, 2) neatness, 3) artistic merit, and 4) appropriate finishing.



If a youth is unable to make it to the Festival of Arts they will be required to write a statement answering the 5 or 6 questions listed in the Face to Face Judging Guidelines and attach it to the exhibit. This can be found on the Monroe County Extension website: <https://monroe.extension.wisc.edu>.



MARKETING



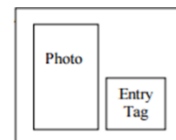
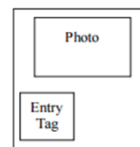
Description - All items submitted will be displayed together. Any item is acceptable that can be used for promotion of 4-H. All entries must have at least one green clover with the four H's. Examples would include posters, placemats, tabletop design, sweatshirts, etc. that promote 4-H visually.

- Please call Club Leader to reserve space for exhibits. Club Leaders are responsible to reserve space for the entire club. You do not need to register online.

If a youth is unable to make it to the Festival of Arts they will be required to write a statement answering the 5 or 6 questions listed in the Face to Face Judging Guidelines and attach it to the exhibit. This can be found on the Monroe County Extension website: <https://monroe.extension.wisc.edu>.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Description - All photos must be 4 x 6 or 5 x 7 only.



- Entry Labeling - All photographs must have a 3" x 5" index card listing: name, club, grade, category, and title of photo. Writing must be legible or deduction to placing may occur. Attach cards securely on the front of the exhibit in such a way that it is easily read and minimizes distracting from or covering the photo.
- Please call Club Leader to reserve space for exhibits. Club Leaders are responsible to reserve space for the entire club. You do not need to register online.
- All photos must be mounted on an 8 x 9 or a 9 x 8 tag board ONLY. Vertical photos will be mounted on the left side, leaving room for the entry tag, and horizontal photos will be mounted on the top. See diagram.
- Photos may be color or black & white, standard or digital, and any appropriate subject.
- Categories include: Animals, People, Still Life, Scenes, Flowers & Plants
- Quotas / Entry Requirements - Limit of two (2) photos per category per exhibitor, with a limit of eight (8) total entries.
- All photos will be judged face-to-face. Items will be released after the awards program. Exhibitors are responsible for the removal of their exhibits.

If a youth is unable to make it to the Festival of Arts they will be required to write a statement answering the 5 or 6 questions listed in the Face to Face Judging Guidelines and attach it to the exhibit. This can be found on the Monroe County Extension website: <https://monroe.extension.wisc.edu>.

CLUB DISPLAY

Description - Each club display table will be judged as a unit by the judges. 1st through 3rd place will be awarded. Members should let their Club Leader know how many items they plan to bring. No need to register online. Club Leaders should contact the office to give the number of tables needed.

- Appearance: pleasing to the eye; neat; well-placed items; items are seen easily and with the name cards uniform and with the proper information. A properly fitting table cloth that adds to the appearance. An easel or peg board is very useful to display drawings and other crafts that need to be hung up for viewing. Distracting packaging or items should be out of sight.
- Arrangements: a good variety of art and craft items. Originality or other characteristics that make the items worthy of recognition. It is not always the number of items but how they are arranged for the people viewing to give a nice appearance.
- Theme: 4-H colors and the club's name is evident.

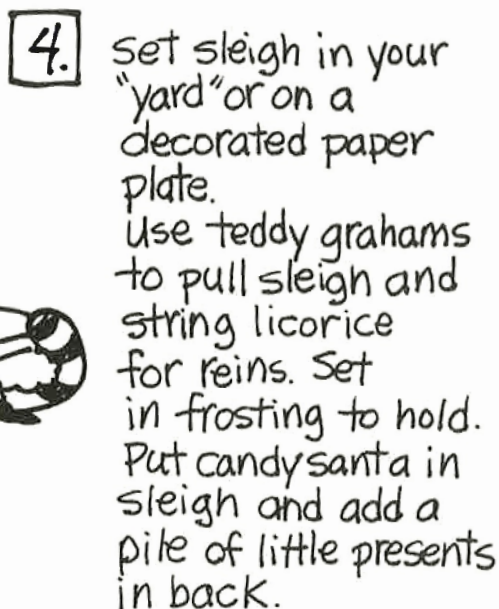


Sleigh to go!

You need:



You do:



What else can you add to your scene?