

Passaic County 4-H Happenings



A note from your 4-H Agent

Hello, Passaic County 4-H!

My name is Kirsten Cowan, and I'm thrilled to introduce myself as the new 4-H agent for Passaic County. My background is focused in animal & veterinary science and all things horses. Prior to joining Passaic County, I served in a county in Maryland, which had a strong interest in cooking and STEM.

Since starting my new role, I've truly enjoyed meeting everyone and starting to learn what programming Passaic County would be interested in. As you know, Jennie has done an incredible job with the program, and it's been such an exciting and busy fall! Highlights include Paws in the Park, the Sustainability Summit, Pictures with the Grinch, Science Saturday, and of course, the 2023-2024 Passaic 4-H Awards Night.

As we head into 2025, be sure to read below about fun programming and opportunities in the new year. Wishing you all a wonderful year ahead

Best, Kirsten Cowan

On behalf of Passaic County 4-H, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the new Passaic County 4-H Agent, Kirsten Cowen. We are very excited to have her join the team and are looking forward the many amazing talents she brings to this program!

-Jennie Thomas, 4-H Program Associate



Hand-Made Valentine's Day Cards

Bring in the New Year with an Act of Service!

This January Passaic County 4-H will be making Valentine's Day cards for recipients of Meals on Wheels. If you are interested in making cards, you can stop by the Wayne 4-H office for supplies, or use what you have around the house!

Please do not include your name or any personal details in the cards. Do include the name of your club and positive messages like "Happy Valentin'es Day" or "You are awesome".

Club leaders will receive supplies for their January meeting

All cards are due to the 4-H office by February 5th

Email Passaic4H@njaes.rutgers.edu for more information!



Passaic County 4-H Happenings

4-H AWARDS NIGHT



Passaic County 4-H held our annual Awards Night on Friday, December 6th, 2024 at the Passaic County Community College Public Safety Academy in Wayne, NJ. Members of the Junior/ Teen Council MC'd the event. We hold this ceremony to recognize and celebrate the many achievements of our 4-Her's in county, state and national events and to acknowledge the dedication of our volunteers.

This year, Passaic County 4-H launched the Clover Awards. The Clover Awards were created to recognize members of a county 4-H program that have demonstrated and upheld the characteristics of the clover: Head, Hands Heart, Health.

Head Award to Erin R. For Exemplary Skills in Leadership, Critical Thinking, Communication and Problem Solving

Hand Award to Nik L. For Exemplary Skills in Leadership, Mentorship, and Communication

Heart Award to Ian C. For Exemplary Skills in Mentorship, Leadership and For Creating a Sense of Inclusion

Health Award to Casey J. For Exemplary Skills in Leadership and Promotion of Healthy Living Through Bag Donation Drive

Thank you to Clara for being the photographer for the evening!



- Head
- Body Language
- Personality
- Social Skills
- Being Prepared
- Being Involved
- Attitude

PREAKNESS AGGIES

The Preakness Aggies meet on the 3rd Saturday of the month at the 4-H Office in Wayne, NJ. The Aggies are a cloverbud club for youth in kindergarten to fourth grade. Each monthly meeting, club members focus on different topics including science, art, agriculture, and much more.

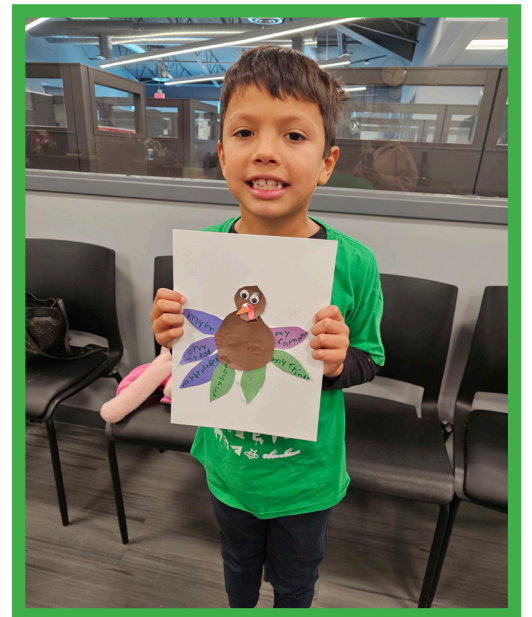
In September, the Aggies learned all about leaves! They learned how to observe the different characteristics of leaves and use those to determine the type of tree the leaves fell from. In October, the Preakness Aggies met at Paws in the Park in Goffle Brook Park in Hawthorne. Members of the club worked with the Junior/Teen Council to teach other youth how to make dog toys out of old t-shirts. We love to upcycle!

For their November meeting, the Aggies created different types of bird feeders. They used many different materials including pine cones, birdseed, pipe cleaners, and cheerios.

During their December meeting, the Preakness Aggies created snow globes with the help of the Junior/Teen Council. Club members also took part in their annual cookie exchange. Each club member is asked to bring 8-10 homemade cookies to exchange with other club members.

This club is recruiting new members!
Please email Passaic4H@njaes.rutgers.edu

Next club meetings: Saturday, January 18th, 2025
Saturday, February 15th, 2025



EMERALD ARCHERS

For their October meeting, the Emerald Archers elected club officers.

Congratulations to...

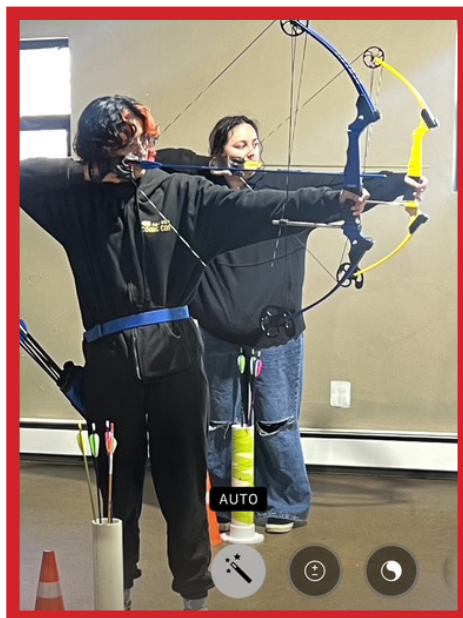
- President: Nik
- Vice President: Ian
- Secretary: Victoria
- Treasurer: James
- Health Recreational Officer: James
- Quartermaster: Jeremiah
- Reporter: Ella

During their club meeting, the Emerald Archers worked on their accuracy and aim. They also focused on building different leadership skills. One way they build leadership skills is by having more experienced club members help new club members to learn how to shoot a bow and arrow.

For the spring, the club is planning on hosting Archery in the Park in collaboration with Parks and Recreation. This event will be at Garret Mountain. Exact dates are to be determined. The Emerald Archers will be meeting on the 1st Saturday of the month at the Lyndhurst Community Center. This club consists of teens and young adults in 5th to 13th grade. This club focuses on leadership, archery skills, and sound decision making.

This club is looking for new members!
Email Passaic4H@njaes.rutgers.edu for more information

Next club meeting: Saturday, February 1st, 2025
Saturday, March 1st, 2025



STEM AMBASSADORS

In September, the STEM Ambassadors elected club officers.

Congratulations to

President: Kabir

Vice President: Casey

Secretary: Nicolas

Treasurer: Aiden

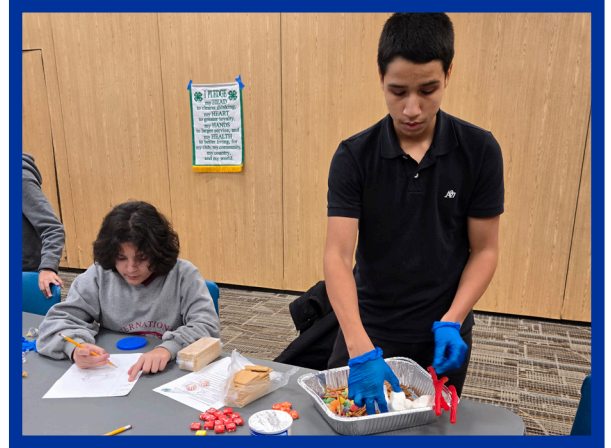
Reporter: Veronica

Health Officer: Ali

For the October meeting, STEM Ambassadors learned about the science of sound. They learned how to create harmonicas using just straws, rubber bands, and popsicle sticks.

In November, the STEM Ambassadors planned activities for Science Saturday at the Circle. They decided which hands-on science activities they wanted use to teach back to youth in 4th to 8th grade on Sat., Dec. 14th. STEM Ambassadors decided to teach about circuits, coding, chemistry, physics, and robotics.

During their December meeting, STEM Ambassadors took part in their second annual Gingerbread House STEM Challenge. Club members broke into teams of 2-3 and were challenged to create a structurally sound gingerbread house. All teams are given the same materials including frosting, graham crackers, pretzels, marshmallows, and many different candies. A lot of sugar was consumed during this 4-H club meeting. Congrats to this years winners: Kabir, Christian, Rayan, and Albaraa.



JUNIOR/ TEEN COUNCIL

Throughout the last few months of our 4-H Junior Teen Council meetings, we have done many fun yet productive activities. Starting in September where we made a variety of friendship bracelets containing positive words/messages or just fun and colorful patterns that are ensured to put smiles on many faces. We used different beads and charms to create the image of interesting looks that will look good on anyone. Each bracelet was made with great effort and can fit in many styles. We also elected club officers in September.

Congratulations to:

President: Erin

Vice President: Megan

Treasurer: Melody

Secretary: Jackie

Reporter: Veronica



In October, instead of a meeting, we all attended a fun event called *Paws in the Park*. This was held in Goffle Brook Park in Hawthorne. The event included a countless amount of cute dogs, all of which were different breeds and sizes. They each have many different features. Another different thing is that many dogs wore costumes! Dogs and owners could compete in a costume contest! And as if these dog's days couldn't get better, we handed out fun and colorful chew toys that we made out of old T-shirts. If you're looking for a fun way to repurpose old T-shirts, making dog chew toys out of them is one. With just a few snips and knots made, we managed to put together a substantial amount of chew toys!

Finally, in November, we planned and designed our 2024 cover paper for the Passaic County 4-H Awards Night. We made a cool paper design that we think is nicely appealing. Not only did we design our cover, but we also organized and wrote the speeches. It may seem like a small part in helping but it sure was an important one. The organization of speeches made sure people who wanted to say something were assigned what they wanted to say and that everyone had a chance to speak. In Junior Teen Council, we stay busy but at the same time, manage to have the best time while doing it.

By: Veronica Lacognata

This club is looking for new club members! Email Passaic4H@njaes.rutgers.edu for more info

Next club meetings: Saturday, January 18th, 2025

Saturday, February 15th, 2025



ART CLUB

This September, Passaic County 4-H launched Art Club! To start off the club year, we played a few icebreakers, we learned about color theory, and we decided on the different types of art we would like to try. Throughout this club year, we will be experimenting with different art mediums including painting, sculpture, photography and much more. This club meets on the first Friday of the month at the 4-H office in Wayne.

For the October meeting, the art club learned how to create jack'o'lanterns. Thank you to the Essex County Environmental Center for donating pumpkins from the Essex Fall Fest! Each 4-Her was able to carve their own pumpkin to take home. They could even take the seeds home if they wanted. 4-Her's learned how to hollow a pumpkin out and then carve a fun design into it.

For the December meeting, this club started to work with tempura paint on canvas. We painted a winter landscape along with Bob Ross. They learned to work with unconventional colors to create a nature scene.

This club is looking for new club members!

Email Passaic4H@njaes.rutgers.edu for more info

Next club meeting, Friday, February 7th, 2025

Friday, March 7th, 2025



ALL PAWS ON DECK

In October, Passaic and Essex County 4-H launched a dog club! *All Paws on Deck* is a 4-H club for all youth interested in dogs. This club meets on the 4th Thursday of the month at Garibaldi Hall in Roseland. Dog ownership is not required to join the club.

We are fortunate enough to have Ms. Johanna join us. Ms. Johanna is an experienced dog trainer and is excited to be part of the club. Club members and leaders used our November club meeting to discuss what the direction of the club would be. This club will focus on learning about dogs in all aspects. We will work on training, grooming, general care, and general knowledge about all things dogs.

For our Decemer meeting, we had enough club members present to officially decide on our club name: *All Paws on Deck*. During this meeting we also talked about the many upcoming events for the 4-H Dog Project in 2025, including the State Dog Show and a new event we can't wait to announce! We also had some four-legged friends present at this meeting. Alil, a 1 1/2 year old Shetland Sheepdog, Rocky a 3-year old mixed breed, and Lola a 5 year-old Shetland Sheepdog. Club members were each given a chance to work with the dogs. They practiced the commands *sit* and *stay*.

In January, our club plans to elect club officers!

We are currently recruiting new members for this club. Email Passaic4H@njaes.rutgers.edu to join.

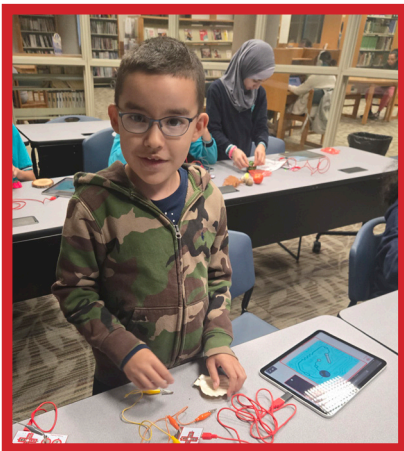
**Next club meetings: Thursday, January 23rd, 2025
Thursday, February 27th, 2025**



IN THE COMMUNITY

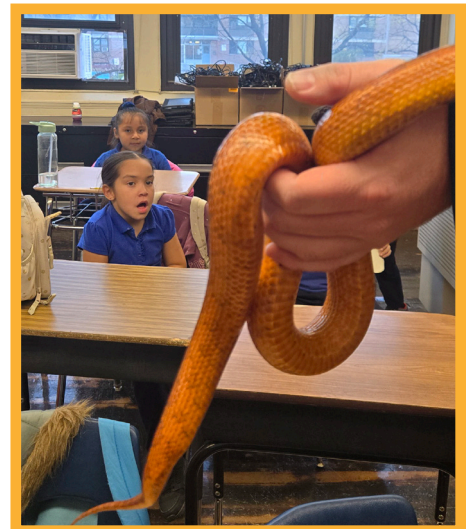
Computer Science and Robotics at the Clifton Public Library

Youth in 4th to 8th grade used technology to explore the wide world of computer science and robotics. This program ran for six weeks from October to December at the Clifton Public Library. Youth engaged in hands-on activities to learn about circuits, conductivity, and much more. They experimnted with different coding languages including SwiftUI, blocking coding with Scratch, and Javascript. This program was provided through the Apple Community Education Initiative.



Animal Science at Oasis Afterschool Program

Youth in kindergarten to 3rd grade in the afterschool program at Paterson Public School 2 learned all about animal science. Each week youth would focus on a different animal and learn about the characteristics, and care of different animals. They would also get to meet and interact with many different animals including rabbits, dogs, snakes, and chickens. Youth were able to meet Seeing Eye puppies in training and learn about what it takes for a puppy to become a service dog.



Sustainability Summit

35 teens from around New Jersey joined scientists at Rutgers University to learn how to be a positive force towards sustainable practices within their communities.

During the day, teens heard from Dr. Josh Kohut, who spoke about the impacts of climate change on our communities and world. Dr. Kohut outlined the drivers of climate change, the impacts on all ecosystems, and how each of us can take action through mitigation and adaptation.

Teens also explored ways in which mitigation takes the form of sustainable practices. The group was broken into 3 teams each of which dove deep into a specific sustainable practice. Solar energy was explored by making a solar panel cell using different conductive fluids. Wind energy outlined some ways in which AI can help in informing us how much energy we can derive from wind platforms and how we know when the platforms need maintenance. Climate Planning explored climate change impacts on public health in NJ and tools to understand and plan for impacts in vulnerable communities.

While talk about the climate can often feel overwhelming, students were encouraged to voice those concerns and were given strategies to help mitigate climate anxiety.



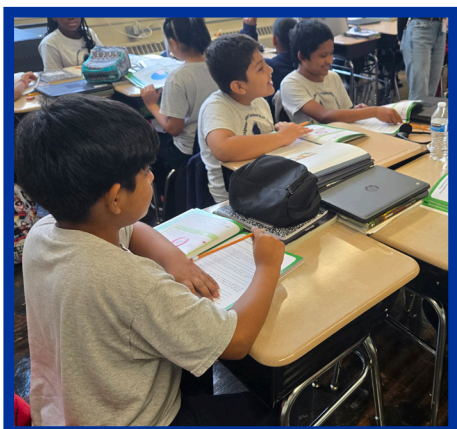
STEAM Day at Paterson STEAM High School

Rutgers 4-H Staff visited Paterson STEAM High School for STEAM Day on December 11th. The 9th grade class learned about the fun side of coding and robotics. During their free period, students were given the chance to learn to code with the Sphero Bolt. Sphero Bolt along with the Sphero Edu app allows students to learn the logic of coding through block coding. They were able to have fun and engage in learning at the same time. Thank you to Casey and Jose for stopping by to help during their free period!



4-H STEM Challenge: Food for Thought!

Youth in 4th to 8th grade engaged in hands-on activities to learn about where their food comes from. This program ran from October to November at the Clifton Library Allwood Branch. Youth engaged in hands-on activities to learn about food systems, improve food security, and help reduce food waste. They were even able to create their own model greenhouse that they could bring home! This program encourages youth to take a deep dive into the food systems and understand how we impact and interact with the food system everyday. It also challenges youth to find new ways to reduce waste through innovative thinking.



Students Learn About Food Loss and Waste

At Paterson Public School 2, the 5th grade class was given the opportunity to learn all about food systems and food loss/waste through a program with National 4-H and the USDA. 4-H Staff joined the students in the classroom to learn about food systems and the impact of climate change on those food systems. They learned utilizing [Guardians of the Food Galaxy](#), developed by Rutgers Cooperative Extension with the help of NJDEP, Americorps, and the USDA.

Through this program students at PS 2 will be able to begin a compost program within their school garden.

Science Saturday at the Circle

On Saturday, December 14th Passaic County 4-H hosted Science Saturday at the Circle at Center City Mall in Paterson. STEM Ambassadors and STEM Educators taught youth in 4th to 8th grade. There were different science activity stations for youth to try out. One of the stations allowed for participants to create their own Oobleck. Another station focused on conductivity using Makey Makey. Thank you to The Circle of Care for partnering with us on this event!



PAWS IN THE PARK



Passaic County Parks and Recreation hosted the 7th Annual Paws in the Park on Saturday, October 14th at Goffle Brook Park in Hawthorne, NJ. The day was filled with fun dog-centric activities including a K-9 demonstration from the Passaic County Sheriff's Department K-9 Unit.

There was also a dog-costume contest. Owners and dogs got into the spirit of the season by wearing matching costumes. Another wonderful part of Paws in the Park was the adoption parade. Many of the local animal rescues walked around the park with the cutest pups available for adoption.

Passaic County 4-H joined the fun with by teaching an upcycling activity. 4-Her's taught how to make DIY dog toys out of old t-shirts. Thank you to Parks and Recreation for the donation of t-shirts! The 4-Her's cut the t-shirts into strips and then tied the strips into complex knots so the dogs cannot get them undone!

ESSEX FALL FEST

Essex County hosted their annual Fall Fest this year on Sunday, September 29th at the Essex County Environmental Center in Roseland. The day started strong with lots of people and activities. Students from West Essex Tech made baked goods for the 4-H Bake Sale fundraiser. 4-Her's ran many different activity stations around Garibaldi Hall. They had a hands-on activity to teach about the items that could and could not be composted. They had a spin art station. Lots of mess, but lots of fun too! There was also a demonstration of reptiles from Rizzo's Wildlife World.

By mid-afternoon the rain started, but that didn't stop 4-Her's from having a great time. They made the best of the situation by creating DIY ponchos from garbage bags. Even with the rain, the watermelon eating contest went on as scheduled.



PICS WITH PETS AND THE GRINCH

Essex County 4-H held their annual Pictures with Pets fundraiser, but this year there was a twist! Instead of Santa Claus, The Grinch Who Stole Christmas stopped by Garibaldi Hall! Despite his mischevious ways, the Grinch was a lot of fun to have at this festive event on Saturday, December 7th. Thank you to the 4-Her's and volunteers that came out to support 4-H! Also a big thank you to all the families that came out to take part in our fun day. Families had their pictures taken with the Grinch, they also got hot chocolate, grinch-green cookies, and to create holiday crafts.



UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES:

10th Annual 4-H Animal Science Video Contest and Film Festival

Information is available at <http://nj4h.rutgers.edu/animals/film-festival>.

Youth may work individually or as a team to create short educational videos (3:30 minutes or less) about alpacas, cats, cattle (beef/dairy), dogs, goats, herpetology, horses, llamas, poultry, rabbits, sheep, small animals, and/or swine to enter in the 4-H Animal Science Video Contest. Youth must upload their video and media release(s) by the end of March 3 (see website for details). The videos will then be shared at the film festival in the Round House of the Rutgers Cook Campus Farm during an afternoon session of the Junior Animal Science Symposium on Saturday, March 29. Youth of the top scoring videos will receive awards, *including gift cards*. Videos will be scored on educational value, creativity, clarity, pacing, and technical quality (sound, lighting, etc.) – 20 points each, total of 100. A [tip sheet](#) and a description of the [judging criteria](#) are both available on the website, along with the top scoring videos from prior years. Youth are encouraged to have fun and be creative in designing their video entries! Details are available at <http://nj4h.rutgers.edu/animals/film-festival>.

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES:



LGBTQ+
4-H CLUB

A SAFE SPACE FOR ALL
TEENS TO MEET VIRTUALLY
ONCE A MONTH

*YOU ARE SEEN,
YOU ARE HEARD,
AND YOU BELONG.*

SCAN THE QR CODE OR
FOLLOW THE LINK TO
SIGN UP



<https://go.rutgers.edu/zhhe8vi8>

Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Boards of County Commissioners. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.



**GLOBAL
FOOD
SECURITY
COALITION**
4-H STEP CLUB

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Cooperative Extension
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

- Club runs from 1/9/25 - 2/6/25
- Learn about global food security issues & work with a mentor to develop a research project
- Attend virtual meetings to refine project and one time in-person writing retreat
- Participate at the NJ World Food Prize Youth Institute at Rutgers New Brunswick March 7th, 2025

OPEN TO YOUTH GRADES 9TH-12TH

REGISTER HERE: go.rutgers.edu/4z0jyhyw



Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Board of County Commissioners. Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Hudson County, Hudson County Department of Health and Human Services, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.

NEW FOR 2025 FROM THE NE REGIONAL VOLUNTEERISM TEAM



**2025 4-H
VOLUNTEER
CONNECTIONS**

These programs are structured to offer connection, engagement, and networking for 4-H volunteers from all 11 states the Northeast Region. Zoom sessions start with "connection before content" with fun icebreaker games and conversation. The main session topic is led by experts, 4-H staff, or volunteer panelists. Volunteers work in breakout sessions to share ideas and learn from one another.

PREPARING FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT: January 22nd -6:30-8 pm
4-H is hands on learning! Have you ever spent hours preparing a hands-on learning experience for youth to then have it fall flat? You might be missing one key ingredient - youth engagement! Join us as we explore the key elements of youth engagement and practical strategies to move from working for youth to working with them!

BUILDING CONNECTIONS FOR SUCCESS: February 19th -6:30-8 pm
While it may seem challenging to navigate the organization and feel connected to the broader 4-H community, you have the power to make a difference. Join us to learn how dedicated 4-H volunteers have faced these challenges head-on through uplifting social gatherings, informal mentoring, and strong community connections. Enhance your leadership skills by building meaningful connections that inspire and empower.

GROWING BEYOND THE RIBBON: March 19th -6:30-8 pm
Join us to explore how the Danish System can be used as a strategy to cultivate youth who continue to grow and thrive. Take a closer look at what those colored ribbons mean and learn strategies to cultivate youth thriving by meeting youth where they are and guiding them to their next level of growth.

REGISTER NOW www.tinyurl.com/4HNERV2025



**2024 NJ Junior
Animal Science
Symposium**

**Location: Round Barn
@ George H. Cook Campus
Rutgers University**

**Location: Intersection
of College Farm Road
and Sheepfold Lane,
North Brunswick
Township, NJ.**

**Saturday
March 23, 2024
8:30 am - 3:00 pm**

For youth and adults
Rain or shine!

Register by 3/16



<https://tinyurl.com/2024AnimalScience>

Hands-on workshops in the following tracks

- Equine
- Swine
- Small Ruminant (Sheep & Goat)
- Large Ruminant (Dairy and Beef Cattle)
- Dairy Quiz Bowl
- Poultry
- Beekeeping
- Rabbit
- Cavy (Guinea Pig)
- Small Animals
- Animal Science Video Contest

Sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture Junior Breeder Program, in cooperation with Rutgers Cooperative Extension faculty and staff.

Questions? Contact:
Amelia.Minervini@rutgers.edu

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 18TH** **January 18th - 10:00 am to 3:00 pm**
JAN World Food Prize Writing Retreat Martin Hall Rutgers University
- 30TH** **January 30th - February 2nd**
JAN Winter Camp at L.G. Cook 4-H Camp, Branchville
- 5TH** **February 5th**
FEB Valentine's Day Cards due to 4-H Office
- 12TH** **March 12th to 16th**
MAR Ignite by 4-H in Washington D.C.
- 23RD** **March 23rd - 8:30 am to 3:00 pm**
MAR NJ Jr Animal Science Symposium at Cook Campus Rutgers Univeristy

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Passaic County



Kirsten Cowen
 Passaic County
 4-H Agent

Jennie Thomas
 Passaic County 4-H
 Program Associate I

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Passaic County 4-H Website: <http://www.passaic.njaes.rutgers.edu>
 New Jersey 4-H: www.nj4h.rutgers.edu
 National 4-H Website: www.4-h.org
 Passaic County 4-H Instagram: [@PassaicCounty4H](https://www.instagram.com/PassaicCounty4H)

The 4-H Youth Development Program is part of Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Cooperative Extension. 4-H educational programs are offered to all youth, grades K-13, on an age-appropriate basis, without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. For additional information, contact: 973-684-4786 or nj4h.rutgers.edu. Cooperative Extension encourages individuals with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you need special accommodations, have questions about physical access, or require alternate means for program information, please contact your local Extension Office. Contact the State Extension Director's Office if you have concerns related to discrimination, 848-932-3583. Rutgers Cooperative Extension is an equal opportunity program provider and employer. Contact your local Extension Office for information regarding special needs or accommodations. Contact the State Extension Director's Office if you have concerns related to discrimination, 848-932-3583

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