

# Passaic County 4-H Happenings



## A note from your 4-H Agent

Hello Passaic County 4-H!

We hope your fall was as exciting as ours! As we put together this newsletter, we couldn't believe how much has been happening. September marked the start of a brand-new 4-H club year, welcome to all our new members and welcome back to our returning ones! We're thrilled to have you as part of our community. Our clubs are humming with activities every month, so if you're looking for more ways to get involved, be sure to check them out.

Beyond our clubs, Passaic County 4-H has been busy in the community: STEM Explorers at the Clifton Library, Animal Science with Wayne Library, Beneficial Bugs with PS2 after-school, Guardians of the Food Galaxy in PS2 in-school, Adulting 101 at PCCC Wanaque, and VetVentures workshops and collaboration with the Essex County Turtle Back Zoo.

Stay connected, share your ideas, and never hesitate to reach out. Here's to an amazing year ahead with Passaic County 4-H!

- Kirsten Cowan

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***"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." - Aesop***

Passaic County 4-H will be making Valentine's Day cards for recipients of Meals on Wheels. Club leaders can pick up supplies for their January club meeting at the 4-H office. All 4-Her's are invited to create cards to send well wishes for the holiday. Please do not include any personal details in the cards.

**Cards due to 4-H Office by Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026**



## Passaic County 4-H Happenings

# PASSAIC COUNTY 4-H AWARDS NIGHT

Passaic County 4-H celebrated our 4-Her's and volunteers on Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at the PCCC Public Safety Academy in Wayne, NJ. Many 4-Hers and their families acknowledged the accomplishments of our youth and volunteers over the 2024-2025 club year. The awards ceremony was followed by snacks and refreshments with friends and family in the cafeteria. We played games and celebrated another successful club year.

Congratulations to our Clover Award winners:

*From Left to Right*

Head Award - Emma S.

Heart Award - Veronica L.

Hands Award - Jacqueline L.

Health Award - Ali A.



# CLUB UPDATES

If you're interested in joining our clubs go to [go.rutgers.edu/joinnj4h](http://go.rutgers.edu/joinnj4h) or email [Passaic4H@njaes.rutgers.edu](mailto:Passaic4H@njaes.rutgers.edu)

## CLOVERBUD ART CLUB

For their first meeting in September, the Cloverbud Art Club created and decorated folders to hold all the amazing art they will make throughout the club year. Welcome to new club members Azlaan, Arsam, Ella, Tyler, Valentina, and Abigail!

In October, the club had another incredible expansion in membership! Welcome to Sihena, Kara Michelle, Julieth, Katelina, Andrew, Alisha, Adriana, Rosie, Luna, and Nathan! For this club meeting, 4-Her's painted pumpkins. Thank you to our friends at the Essex Environmental Center for the pumpkins! In November, the club decided to get creative with iPads. We created amazing digital art using lessons from Everyone Can Create from the Apple Community Education Initiative.



## PREAKNESS AGGIES

In September the Preakness Aggies hosted an open house at the Wayne Office for those interested in joining 4-H. We had a range of fun activities including hands on science stations, art stations and opportunities to speak with current 4-Her's.

For our October Meeting, the Preakness Aggies joined Junior/Teen Council and the West Milford Club for a Fall harvest at the Rutgers Cooperative Extension High Tunnel in Wayne with Master Gardener Coordinator Julia Piermatteo. Thanks Miss Julia for her time and patience!

Family & Community Health Sciences Educator, Jennifer Taylor joined the Aggies for our November meeting. We learned how to make cornucopias out of Pillsbury crescent rolls and how to safely cut up vegetables. We also learned how to make ranch dressing at home. Thanks to Miss Jennifer for spending her Saturday teaching us!

**This club is accepting new members and volunteers!**

**Next club meeting: Saturday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

**Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026**



## ART CLUB

In September, Art Club created vision boards. They could be for 1 year, 5 years or 10 years into the future. 4-Her's were encouraged to imagine where they would like to be and then we discussed how they could one day achieve their goals. Welcome to new club member Grace!

During their October meeting, the club decided to paint pumpkins to get into the spooky season. Thank you to the Essex Environmental Center for the pumpkins!

In November, Art Club got creative with iPads and made amazing digital art from the Everyone Can Create lessons from the Apple Community Education Initiative.

**This club is recruiting new members and volunteers!**

**Next club meetings: Friday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

**Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026**



## ALL PAWS ON DECK

In September, All Paws on Deck started the meeting with a pack walk around the Environmental Center. We planned out what we would like to do for future club meetings.

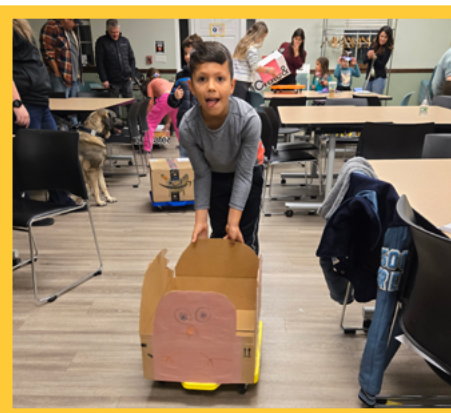
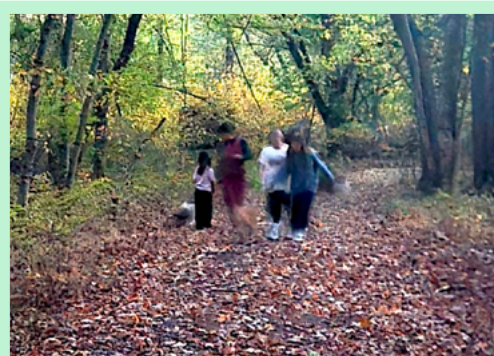
In October, we created dog toys out of old t-shirts for dogs in the animal shelter. We also talked about what to do in the event our dog were to accidentally ingest candy during the holiday season. It was a very important discussion.

In November, we welcomed new club members. Welcome to Caleb, Maria and Benjamin! Club members also teamed up to create parade floats out of cardboard boxes and crafts materials. The floats were inspired by Thanksgiving Day Parade floats. Once the floats were constructed, we attached them to scooters and then paraded them with our dogs around Garibaldi Hall.

**This club is recruiting new members and volunteers!**

**Next club meeting: Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026**

**Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026**



# EMERALD ARCHERS

In September, the Emerald Archers showed members of the public how to shoot arrows at the Bergen County 4-H Fall Festival at Van Saun Park.

In October and November, the club met at the Lyndhurst Community Center. They welcomed many new club members. Welcome to Maxwell, Lucas, Jayden F., Liberty and Jaden L.!

**Next club meetings: Saturday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026  
Saturday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026**



# JUNIOR/TEEN COUNCIL

In September, Junior/Teen Council hosted an Open House at the 4-H office to recruit new members to join Passaic County 4-H. It was a very successful event with club members running the different activity stations for potential 4-Hers to try out. The members were available to answer questions about 4-H to new and potential members.

In October, Junior/Teen Council hosted the Preakness Aggies and the West Milford Club at the RCE High Tunnel in Wayne. As a group, they harvested many different vegetables including green and red lettuce, swiss chard, bell peppers, cucumbers, and celery. All produce was donated to CUMAC, a food bank in Paterson.

In November, Junior/Teen Council planned out Awards Night including writing the script and creating the agenda for the night. This is the achievement ceremony for Passaic County 4-H that takes place on the first Friday of December every year.

**This club is recruiting new members and volunteers!**

**Next club meetings: Saturday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026**



# STEM AMBASSADORS

For our September meeting, STEM Amabssadors elected club officers. Congratulations to:

- President: Casey J
- Vice Preseident: Aleena M.
- Secretary: Genesis L.
- Treasurer: Aiden M.
- Reporter: Veronica L.
- Health Officer: Lenora J.

We also listened to a wonderful presentation from Aleena M. about her trip with 4-H International to Japan. Aleena stayed with a family in Japan for 4 weeks to learn all about Japanese culture.

In October, there were different stations dedicated to different activities. Every person got to choose which station they wanted to do. "At my station, we took pictures of people on our iPad and drew things around their photos that described them" - Jacqueline L.

We also discussed future plans including possibly having a fundraiser in the spring!

Written by Veronica L.



## WEST MILFORD CLUB

The West Milford 4-H Club kicked off the new 4-H year in September at Camp Hope with a meeting of planning and learning. Members voted on bylaws, introduced new club officers, brainstormed ideas for the year ahead, and explored artificial intelligence by using iPads to identify plants and animals around camp.

In October, the club traveled to Wayne to collaborate with the Preakness Aggies and Junior/Teen Council at the RCE Passaic Master Gardeners' High Tunnel. Together, they learned about fall harvesting and how to grow their own gardens.

November brought the club back to Camp Hope for an exciting session on insects and black light, where members observed different bugs in the area and discovered the fascinating world of entomology.

*Upcoming meetings:*

- December 19<sup>th</sup> - Gingerbread STEM Challenge
- January 16<sup>th</sup> - Valentines Day Cards
- February 20<sup>th</sup> - Animal Science Videos

# IN THE COMMUNITY

## Beneficial Bugs Afterschool

In October and November, 40 youth in kindergarten to 2nd grade learned all about beneficial bugs in Oasis afterschool program at PS 2 in Paterson. Students were able to learn about different types of insects, arachnids and all forms of creepy crawlies and how those invertebrates can be very helpful for people through hands-on lessons. Different topics in the lessons were bees, beetles and butterflies. Students were also able to find and identify bugs within the school garden. A big thank you to Miss Julia Piermatteo, Master Gardener Coordinator, for presenting about the different insect mouthparts during one of our lessons.



## STEM Explorer's at the Library

Youth in 4th-8th grade were invited to discover the fun and exciting parts of STEM through the STEM Explorer's STEP Club at the Clifton Public Library Allwood Branch. (A STEP Club is a Short Term Exploratory program in which youth are invited to join a 6-8 week program about a specific topic.) For this program, each week youth focused on a different area of STEM. They have learned how to extract DNA from strawberries, how electricity flows through conductive materials, how to engineer a marble run and how to solve mysteries with math. Over 25 youth participated in lessons from October to December.

STEM Explorer's will be returning to the Clifton Public Library in January at the re-opened Main Branch!



## Guardians of the Food Galaxy in Paterson

The 5th grade class at Paterson Public School 2 is learning about Food Loss and Waste through Guardians of the Food Galaxy in school program. This program merges climate change education with food waste reduction and gardening based-lessons. The goal of the program is to improve school administrations' and students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors towards adopting healthy and sustainable eating habits and encourage waste reduction and gardening production. This program will run from October 2025 to March 2026.





## Hike For Healing

Passaic County 4-H joined the Circle of Care and Passaic County Parks and Recreation for a family friendly hike at the Highlands Preserve in Hewitt NJ on Saturday, September 6. The 2nd annual Hike for Healing highlighted the importance of mental health awareness and the strength of communities. The one mile hike was lead by Ranger Scott Campbell. Almost 200 people and many four-legged friends joined the hike!



## Paws in the Park

Passaic County 4-H joined Passaic County Commissioners at a very rainy Paws in the Park this October. Over 2,000 people and their four-legged friends joined the event in at Goffle Brook Park in Hawthorne. Thanks to the 4-Hers that made their way out in the weather: Julie, Declan, Caleb and Isobel! We made a dozen dog toys out of upcycled t-shirts. These toys will be donated to dogs at the local animal shelters.



## HSI Farm to Table

In October, 4-Hers from Bergen, Essex, Hudson and Passaic County came together at Bergen Community College to learn what it takes to grow their own produce, care for livestock, and they even prepared a snack using delicious local ingredients. Hands-on workshops were led by 4-H staff, MEVO Farms, American Dining Creations, and Montclair Community Farms. After the event, families were invited to stay for a catered lunch made from local produce.

## VetVentures at Turtleback Zoo

This November, Passaic & Essex County 4-H partnered with Essex County Turtle Back Zoo to host an unforgettable Adventures in Veterinary Science Discovery Day. Fifteen youth, grades 7th -12th, joined us for a full day of behind-the-scenes look at animal health and veterinary science.

Youth explored topics like canine anthropology, animal health care, and exotic veterinary medicine. They had the opportunity to tour the Zoo's brand-new state of the art Wellness Center and took part in a zoo scavenger hunt (did you know a giraffe's heart weigh 25lbs?!). The day wrapped up with skill labs featuring owl pellet dissection and a suturing and injection demo, giving participants a true taste of what it's like to work in animal science and veterinary science.

Thank you to our incredible partners and guest speakers for making this event possible! Stay tuned for more VetVentures opportunities coming soon.



# UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES



**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY**  
4-H Youth Development  
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

## GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY COALITION

4-H STEP CLUB RUNS 1/6-2/3

**Learn about global food security issues, develop your own research paper with a mentor, attend our writing retreat, and present your work at the NJ World Food Prize Youth Institute at Rutgers New Brunswick on March 6, 2026!**

**REGISTER HERE: [GO.RUTGERS.EDU/NJ4HWFP](https://go.rutgers.edu/nj4hwfp)**

**SCAN ME**




New Jersey 4-H Presents

## Kitchen to Community... Cooking for a Cause!

**12 week program schedule**

Rutgers Campus-  
1/31, 2/21 and 4/18

Food Innovation Center-  
3/7 and 3/21



scan the QR code to register or use the address below



<https://go.rutgers.edu/4hkitchen2community>

**Open to youth in 8th-13th grade**

Work alongside industry professionals to develop a recipe, create the food, bottle and package it for distribution to local food banks.

For more information contact Donna Griebau, Cape May County 4-H Program Associate at [donna.griebau@rutgers.edu](mailto:donna.griebau@rutgers.edu) or Kirsten Cowan, Passaic County Agent at [kirsten.cowan@rutgers.edu](mailto:kirsten.cowan@rutgers.edu)




HIGHLANDS



STEM | Community | Education | Fun



**STEM Exploration through Robotics.** Youth will learn the basics of designing, building, and coding robots in this 6-week program.

**Youth in Grades 4<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> \***

*\*Older youth welcome - please reach out*

**6-Week Hands on Program**

**Tuesday's 4:30-5:30pm**

**1/6/26, 1/13/26, 1/20/26,  
1/27/26, 2/3/26, 2/10/26**

**Location: Highland Family Success Center**

**FREE!**



**Please register here**



**or Call 973-506-6575**



**REGISTER TODAY!**

## 4-H DOG DISCOVERY DAY

**Monday, February 16, 2026  
10am-3pm**



**Open to youth in grades K-13**

Learn about our canine companions, hear from guest speakers, test your knowledge, and have fun with new friends! Topics covered include breed histories, canine anatomy, veterinary care, nutrition, grooming, and canine careers.

Lunch may be brought from home or pre-ordered.

**County College of Morris**  
214 Center Grove Rd.  
Randolph, NJ 07869



Register at <https://go.rutgers.edu/ewgvxh2u>







Special thanks to the New Jersey 4-H Dog Project Advisory Council (PAC) and the Morris County Dogs R Us 4-H Club for their support.

Adults invited to stay to listen to presenters or work in designated classroom space. Youth in grades K-3 **must** be accompanied by an adult.


Questions? Contact [morris4h@njaes.rutgers.edu](mailto:morris4h@njaes.rutgers.edu)

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.

# DECEMBER



	1 Research Ready	2	3	4	5 Passaic County 4-H Awards Night	6 Emerald Archers Photos with the Grinch
7	8	9	10 STEM Ambassadors	11 Leaders' Association	12 Cloverbud Art Club Art Club	13
14 	15	16 All Paws on Deck Dog Club	17	18	19 West Milford Club	20 Jr/Teen Council Preakness Aggies
21	22 	23	24 <i>4-H Office Closed</i>	25  <i>4-H Office Closed</i>	26 <i>4-H Office Closed</i>	27
28	29	30	31  <i>4-H Office Closed</i>			

# JANUARY

				1  <i>4-H Office Closed</i>	2	3 Emerald Archers
4	5 Research Ready	6 World Food Prize Club	7	8 Leaders' Association	9 Cloverbud Art Club Art Club	10 Volunteer Appreciation
11	12	13 World Food Prize Club	14 STEM Ambassadors	15	16 West Milford Club	17 Jr/Teen Council Preakness Aggies
18	19 MLK Day of Service Research Ready <i>4-H Office Closed</i>	20 All Paws on Deck Dog Club World Food Prize Club	21	22	23	24 World Food Prize Writing Rereat
25	26	27 World Food Prize Club	28	29	30 Teen Winter Camp	31

CALENDAR IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

# FEBRUARY

1 Teen Winter Camp	2 <i>Americorps Applications Due</i> Research Ready	3 World Food Prize Club	4	5	6 Cloverbud Art Club Art Club	7 Emerald Archers
8	9 Valentine's Day Cards due to 4-H Office	10	11 STEM Ambassadors	12 Leaders' Association	13	14 
15	16  Dog Discovery Day Research Ready 4-H Office Closed	17 All Paws on Deck Dog Club	18	19	20 West Milford Club	21 Jr/Teen Council Preakness Aggies
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

# MARCH

1	2 Research Ready	3	4	5	6 New Jersey Youth Institute Cloverbud Art Club Art Club	7 Emerald Archers
8	9	10	11 STEM Ambassadors	12 Leaders' Association	13	14
15	16 Research Ready	17  All Paws on Deck Dog Club	18	19	20 West Milford Club	21 Jr/Teen Council Preakness Aggies
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Ignite by 4-H Youth Summit Series						
29 Ignite by 4-H	30					

CALENDAR IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE



**PASSAIC COUNTY 4-H**

**Join Our**



# VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY

*& make a difference*

**Benefits:**  
 AmeriCorps Healthy Communities Corps (HCC) Overview

- Benefits: In exchange for service, members receive a biweekly living allowance stipend and a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award upon successful completion of their term.

**REQUIREMENTS:**


- Service Requirement: Members are generally expected to serve about 20-25 hours per week.
- Term Slots: Available service terms range from 300 hours up to 1200 hours, with corresponding compensation.
- Eligibility: Applicants must be at least 18 years of age, possess a high school diploma or GED, and be a US citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident.



**4-H Community Education Assistant position**  
 Part of the Healthy Communities Corps (HCC) AmeriCorps program, hosted by Montclair State University.

This role involves enriching and **educating youth** populations throughout one of the participating counties including Passaic, Essex, Hudson, or Bergen County on topics such as **STEM, Animal Science,** and **Healthy Living** through **fun, hands-on activities**. The individual will be responsible for co-facilitating lessons and events alongside 4-H staff.

**Application Due**  
**JANUARY 2ND**  
[go.rutgers.edu/passaic4hamericorps](http://go.rutgers.edu/passaic4hamericorps)




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 4-H Youth Development Program  
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 Program Associate I

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

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](http://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