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For Immediate Release:

June 18, 2020

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**4-H Exploring Nature through Art!
Monroe County Youth Create Botanically Printed Bookmarks and Postcards**

Hammers thumping away resonate throughout the virtual workshop. Construction lesson? Nope! Youth learn about the beauty and science behind flowers during the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County 4-H Youth Development Nature Printing workshop on June 15, 2020.

Nine youth and their families virtually gathered with educators Jessica Reid and Lori Koenick to celebrate the colors in our landscape through printing. Colorful flower petals and rich green leaves and stems were captured onto paper through a technique called flower pounding. Prior to the workshop, participants were each mailed a printing kit. Printing kits contained watercolor postcards and bookmarks to be used for the final creations.

The workshop started with discussion on the parts of a flower and different types of pigments one may see in them. Participants learned that flowers contain male and female elements that are necessary for the flower to produce seed. Participants predicted which part of the flower would contain the most pigment, and explored the colors of common plant pigments, chlorophyll, anthocyanin, carotenoids, and betalains.

Participants gathered their materials and it was time to experience flower pounding. Reid demonstrated the technique in the workshop. She described the set-up as a "lasagna", placing towels down first followed by layering a cutting board, paper, flower part, and paper towel to top it off. Next, she modeled gently tapping the paper towel with a hammer to capture the flower pigments onto the paper.

Youth gleefully joined the flower party, tapping flowers using mallets and hammers, to make their own creations. Big smiles were seen when youth displayed their creations on camera for the rest of the group to see. One participant shared that she made a bookmark to give to her Dad as a father's day present, another participant made a postcard she will give to her neighbor.

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The workshop concluded with a discussion on the various uses of flower pounding and how to harvest flowers sustainably. Educators encouraged participants to label their prints with the name of the flower to get better with flower identification and to make prints for others to enjoy as well. All enjoyed learning about plant parts and processes essential to life on earth through art.

The Monroe County 4-H Program is offered through Cornell Cooperative Extension to the youth of Monroe County. 4-H is a worldwide youth development program open to all youth ages 5 to 19, who want to have fun, learn new skills, and explore the world. In return, youth who participate in 4-H find a supportive environment and opportunities for hands-on or "experiential" learning about things that interest them. Learn more at <http://monroe.cce.cornell.edu/4-h-youth-development>.



Example flower prints made during Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County 4-H Nature Printing workshop on June 15, 2020.

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