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4-H Fulfills the Need for In-Person and Virtual Learning Opportunities

Mighty Monday: Spring into gardening event engages youth virtually and in-person

Monroe County youth welcomed Spring with the Mighty Monday: Spring Into Gardening Workshop. With comfort levels varying, and group size still a concern, the Monroe County 4-H team brainstormed ways to ensure all youth had access to the event. The virtual workshop was offered simultaneously with an in-person workshop. Half of the youth participants "zoomed" into the Wegman Lodge at Seneca Park as the other half of participants joined in person.

All youth received kits that included materials needed to complete three different activities. Those attending in-person received their kits the night of the event, while those participating on zoom were able to pick-up their kits at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Monroe County office prior to the event.

The workshop was designed with flexibility and inclusion in mind. It was important that all youth felt engaged and included in the workshop. To create a group feel, all of the youth introduced themselves and shared their favorite plant to grow in the garden. Those on zoom were further supported by a 4-H volunteer who managed the chat and communicated any needs to the in-person 4-H team.

Youth learned about insects, vegetables, and how the two interact in the garden with a game of garden bingo. Learning about plants and their needs, the youth brainstormed what plants need to survive and how similar those needs are to the needs of humans. Youth participants then had the opportunity to dissect a seed and create a seed germination necklace where they will be able to observe their very own seeds begin to sprout. The final activity of the evening included creating a "plant person" using grass seed, soil, and a recycled can.

The response to this hybrid learning model was positive, with youth participating both in-person and through a virtual experience. This model gave those who would like to be in-person the opportunity while also making sure those who would like to remain at home the ability to do so. As we continue to navigate through this time, hybrid learning opportunities will be utilized to ensure that all youth feel most comfortable to take part in positive 4-H learning experiences.

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 aged

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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 about 4-H at <http://monroe.cce.cornell.edu/4-h-youth-development>.



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