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**Spring Gardening Camp Engages Youth in 4-H Activities
4-H'ers learn through hands-on learning experiences**

"My favorite part of camp was drawing my garden, and making friends." 4-H'er Timothy tells fellow campers and volunteers on the last day of the 4-H Spring Gardening Camp. Youth from the Rochester City School District's Enrico Fermi School 17 had the opportunity to participate in five days of hands-on learning experiences with 4-H volunteers from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County (CCE-Monroe), Enrico Fermi School 17, and Center for Youth: Earthworks program.

Youth gained hands-on experience as they participated in garden-based learning activities and activities in the school's garden and greenhouse. Monroe County 4-H volunteers guided youth through four days of projects and ended the camp with a field trip to the Strong Museum of Play and Butterfly Garden. The camp was open to all Enrico Fermi School 17 students in grades K-2.

The camp stemmed from a discussion between Rochester Youth Year (RYY) VISTA's, Destiny Draggett and Yoenia Bernit, located at host sites CCE-Monroe and Enrico Fermi School 17. RYY VISTA's serve for a year at a site throughout Monroe County with the goal of building capacity and increasing sustainability.

Special guests from CCE-Monroe and Enrico Fermi School 17 led youth through activities that allowed them to dive deeper into every aspect of gardening. 4-H educator, Lori Koenick, guided youth through a soil painting activity where they learned the difference between soil and dirt, how soil impacts the success of gardens, and why it is so important! 4-H'ers then had the opportunity to create their very own soil paintings using soil collected from the local area. Nutrition educator, Iluminada Vilca, taught youth about the importance of having plenty of "go foods" in one's diet and why it is important to limit "woah foods" or foods that are high in sugars and fats. Youth applied this knowledge in a hands-on matching game. The 4-H'ers also had the privilege of venturing into the big kids science room with 7th grade science teacher, Ellie Coonce. Miss Coonce guided youth through an activity where they dissected and examined a tulip. Using microscopes, 4-H'ers were able to look at pollen from flowers and draw what they were seeing; an opportunity that many youth do not have until middle school.

Aside from these activities, youth also learned about the three sisters, designed their own garden

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beds, and planted tomatoes, cucumbers, sunflowers AND microgreens! Due to the quick growing time of microgreens, many 4-H'ers were able to see sprouts by the last day of camp. A very exciting discovery for all involved.

The 4-H Spring Garden Camp gave youth the opportunity to participate in a positive learning environment where they were encouraged to explore, discover, and question the world around them. The 4-H team, in collaboration with School-17 and Center for Youth: Earthworks program, is excited for next year's camp and the opportunity to introduce more youth to gardening!

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 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>.

