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**Monroe County 4-H Rallies and Goes Online  
Clubs and Programs Continue to Meet Despite Covid-19**

We are in a world health crisis. Social distancing recommendations have forced us to stop in person gatherings and programs. 4-H has a one hundred year history of promoting hands-on learning. How does 4-H accomplish this virtually? With the help of innovative volunteers, 4-H is carrying on with learning and developing a sense of belonging in youth.

Social connection and learning has not stopped in Monroe County. 4-H clubs and school programs have continued to meet, using virtual learning and meeting platforms. 4-H members and volunteers are using video software and online classrooms to maintain connection.

Despite social distancing, 4-H groups are still able to share meals together and play games. The Posh Ponies club has incorporated food into part of their club meetings, eating dinner together and asking people to bake something in advance to "share" with the group virtually. Virtual meetings allow groups to see aspects of each other's lives that perhaps they would not see under typical conditions, such as pets. Games can still be played with a little creativity involved, the Posh Ponies were still able to practice for horse bowl through an online trivia game.

All ages are able to participate in these virtual connections. 4-H Friends, a Cloverbud group in Monroe County, is meeting online. Club members are reading books to one another, singing songs, and baking soft pretzel treats. During one meeting, club member Avery led the groups in making a paper flower craft.

Mariah Meadows 4-H Club also met virtually. They took the time to connect and were thrilled to see each other. The Westside Science and Nature Explorers have also turned to electronic devices to keep in touch.

The 4-H UNITY (Urban Neighborhoods Improved Through Youth) group continues to meet weekly. They have been participating in virtual icebreakers and forging ahead with their community action project.

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School based programs are continuing to meet! The Bishop Kearney High School Horticulture class has been meeting virtually and completing online assignments. Students took part in a food scavenger hunt in the home to learn about the food system and how they participate in it. Students have participated in online workshops on plant growing zones and kitchen scrap gardening.

Afterschool club, The Green Team, at Children's School of Rochester, has been meeting virtually every week. During these meetings, the group shares stories from the week through photos and other creative means. To celebrate Earth Day, group members made Earth collages. The team works on individual and group projects. Individual projects include measuring how high squirrels can jump and germinating maple seedlings. The group participated in kitchen scrap gardening and soil workshops.

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>.



4-H Friends club member, Avery, led the group in making a paper flower craft. Photo by\_\_\_\_\_.

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