

Isabella County 4-H Clubs Pledge their “Hands to Larger Service”

Last fall, 16 Isabella County 4-H Clubs turned in community service reports documenting their 2003 – 2004 club year community service learning projects. 338 youth and 159 adults participated in over 4,588 hours of service to their community. These service hours are in addition to the time spent volunteering in 4-H.

What do youth gain from community service learning? By giving back to their community, young people:

- Learn the value of helping others
- Develop leadership, communication and organizational skills and a sense of empowerment
- Learn how to cooperate with one another and work as a team with diverse groups of people including adults, peers, and other with different backgrounds and experiences
- Build self-esteem from the positive results of their service
- Develop problem solving skills by applying their knowledge to real world situations
- Develop a sense of being responsible for their community and a sense that citizenship requires them to actively participate in their community

Community Service Learning Projects included:

- Adopt a Highway roadside clean ups and township parks clean ups
- Donations to and working at the local soup kitchen and food banks
- Visits to numerous nursing homes in Isabella County
- Memorials to fallen soldiers in Iraq
- Providing a Petting Zoo at Special Olympics
- Donations to Christmas Outreach and Toys for Tots
- Working at the Shepherd Maple Syrup Festival
- Home visits, yard clean ups, and home repairs for the elderly and shut ins
- Clean up of local Church grounds and parks
- Participation in The American Cancer Society Relay for Life
- Participation in the Crop Walk
- Donations to Central Michigan Pregnancy Center
- Fundraisers for the Shepherd Fire Department

The 4-H youth and adults work together to identify a need in their community (outside of 4-H), address the need, and afterwards discuss and evaluate their impact. These service projects help youth become invested in their community. Additionally, these projects demonstrate that youth are community resources who care and make a difference.