



**Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

# Positive Youth Development Programming: July-September 2025



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## Needs Assessment

- Youth have an opportunity to explore their spark(s)
- Mentorship programs where older youth (ages 15-24) can mentor or volunteer for younger generations.
- Youth engagement increases in county level programming

## Middle School STEM programs-July/August

The AmeriCorps member made it her mission to spread awareness for the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) opportunities in 4-H. She organized both library programs and day camps revolving around a variety of STEM topics. From identifying animals based on their scat to exploring the science behind optical illusions to evaluating the plausibility of bringing dinosaurs back to life, her library programs reached youth as young as two years old and adults as old as sixty-one across four different libraries. Additionally, she hosted Teen STEM Camps, a series of three two-day programs. Youth explored how science can be applied around the world, the science within our kitchens, and the intricacies of the human brain. They traced the food webs of the African savanna, separated the different colored dyes in some favorite candies, and emphasized lobes of the brain with Minute to Win It challenges. These STEM opportunities with both 4-H members and non-members.

**Youth also attended educational project programs taught by volunteers. Those included:**

- Archery
- Dogs
- Horse
- Poultry, Rabbits and Cavies

## Cloverbud Day Camps-July/August

The majority of 4-H programming is geared towards older youth members, so programming for Cloverbuds needs to be intentional and accessible for families. The second AmeriCorps member offered Summer Wild Wacky Weekdays and day camp with Columbia county. Cloverbuds experienced a smaller version of overnight 4-H camp. This experience prepares them for future overnight camps by helping them gain independence, learning outdoor skills, and exploring nature. Older 4-H youth gained experience as camp counselors as they cared for the Cloverbuds and assisted them throughout the day. This experience prepares them for overnight camp counseling opportunities.

## Sparks Opportunities at the County Fair

At the fair, the educator invited youth to share their sparks; activities or skills that interest them and help them find joy, energy, and purpose; with families at the county fair. If you were at the fair, you were able to visit with youth and learn more about shooting sports, dogs, swine, sheep, poultry, legos, cavies, robotics and rabbits. Thanks to the youth for sharing information and enhancing their communication skills. And thanks also to the AmeriCorps members for including the sparks road map and teaching project sparks at the fair!

It was not surprising to me that there are youth in projects that can share their spark with youth. However, I have one story in particular to share. There is an older youth, who has some learning challenges. She is generally very quiet and adds information when asked. During this spark time with the cavies project, she gathered some fur from a long haired cavy that was not at the fair, shared with youth the differences in the texture of the hair. She was very knowledgeable about the cavy project and was able to engage youth and answer questions from the parents as well. It was exciting to see this youth shine as she shared her spark with others!

## Current Projects:

- Cloverbud Sparks program
- Officer training
- Re-enrollment
- New Family Gathering