WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT?
The 4-H Proud Equestrians Program (PEP) is one of a few 4-H-based programs for riders with disabilities in the U.S. Riders include people with physical, developmental, emotional or multiple disabilities. You can be involved in the program either as a youth or adult rider or as a youth or adult volunteer.

Riders:
» Learn to ride.
» Learn horse management skills.

Volunteers:
» Assist riders until they develop the skills to ride independently.
» Serve on planning committees to design local programs, help with fund raising, loan horses or facilities, and fill other vital roles.
» If desired, earn a special certification as a therapeutic riding instructor to teach riding and horsemanship skills.

Starting Out:
» Develop basic riding skills.
» Identify colors, breeds and types of equines.
» Practice safe handling of animals.
» Learn grooming techniques.

Learning More:
» Improve balance, coordination and posture, and muscle tone.
» Participate in shows, fairs and other activities.
» Describe the signs of a healthy animal.
» Learn and perform the basics of feeding and caring for horses.

Expanding Horizons:
» Take on more responsibility in assisting less-skilled riders and mentoring them.
» Explore related careers in special education, occupational and physical therapy, veterinary and human medicine, and animal science.

THE BIG PICTURE
Volunteers assist riders to attain the skills as described in the following objectives:

Michigan Resources
» Michigan Equine News: www.equinews.msue.msu.edu
» Michigan State University Department of Animal Science, Youth Horse Programs: http://www.ans.msu.edu/youth_extension_programs/horse_youth_programs
» Michigan State University Extension eXtension Horses: www.extension.org/horses
» My Horse University: www.myhorseuniversity.com

National 4-H Curricula
» National 4-H Horse Curricula List: http://www.4-h.org/search/?q=horse%20science

Other Resources
» Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH) (formerly NARHA): http://www.pathintl.org
FOCUS ON 4-H PEP

Science
» Observe the physiological and behavioral effects of illness or lameness on a horse’s body.
» Ask questions and formulate answers related to biology and nutrition using equines as a model.
» Learn about the impact of physical and emotional disabilities on others.

Communication
» Develop or enhance the ability to communicate with others, both horse and human.
» Create and perform a demonstration that explains how to perform a specific skill in horse care and management.

Citizenship & Leadership
» Develop a public speaking or demonstration entry for the Michigan 4-H Equine Communication Contest.
» Help others understand the challenges of living with a disability.
» Assist in the adaptation of other 4-H projects for individuals with disabilities.

Life Skills
» Increase self-esteem, self-confidence, discipline and social growth through attaining success and helping others succeed in the program.
» Practice personal resiliency through successes and challenges.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?
» Contact your local Michigan State University (MSU) Extension office for 4-H PEP workshops, activities and events.

» If you are interested in a college education in animal science, veterinary or human medicine, special education, or occupational or physical therapy, visit the MSU website at www.msu.edu to explore those majors.

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