In 2016, the state’s $60.2 million investment in MSU AgBioResearch and MSU Extension generated more than $1 billion for Michigan residents. Every dollar the state invested in AgBioResearch and MSU Extension leveraged an additional $2.68 in federal funds and external contracts, grants and other revenues, including nearly $1.1 million leveraged by MSU Extension children and youth programs alone. As a result, MSU Extension and MSU AgBioResearch are able to serve Michigan residents with a benefit/cost ratio of 19:1 when adding in other social and economic benefits too.

These cost benefits are huge, but they are not the only benefits that MSU Extension brings to the state. Through MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development, more than 209,000 youth learn compassion, respect, leadership skills, responsibility, the value of hard work and other critical abilities. In addition, MSU Extension early childhood education programs prepare thousands of Michigan’s youngest children for school success.

“I am very confident that I will do well in future interviews.”

- 4-H Exploration Days workforce preparation program participant

THE ISSUE

By the time they enter the workforce, today’s youth will address problems not yet identified with tools that don’t currently exist. According to the MacArthur Foundation’s Cathy Davidson, 65 percent of today’s grade school students will end up working in jobs not yet invented. With so much uncertainty, young people need more than a good education to prepare for that perfect job: they need well-rounded skills that can be applied to any career as well as the ability to explore and try on exciting opportunities in a safe and informative way.

MSU EXTENSION ACTION

To meet this important need, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension offers 4-H Youth Development programs that focus on entrepreneurship, financial literacy, career exploration and workforce preparation. Through these various programs and activities, MSU Extension arms young Michiganders with the skills and competencies critical to any job while allowing youth to explore various career options and entrepreneurship. In 2016, this programming reached 11,100 participants in 80 Michigan counties through more than 375 educational activities. In addition, Michigan 4-H’ers explored more than 10,000 projects related to career exploration and workforce preparation.

THE IMPACT

As a result of these vocation-related activities, thousands of Michigan youth are better equipped to make important decisions about their professional future, ready to contribute to the workforce and able to take fiscal responsibility in their personal lives. In comparison to before their 4-H experiences, youth showed significant increases in a variety of skills after their involvement in career exploration and workforce development related 4-H programs. In particular, youth showed:
Significant increases in their understanding of sound business and financial management practices. Specifically they showed a:

- 57% increase in those who understood the parts of a business plan.
- 30% increase in those who understood how a credit card works.

Significant increases in their knowledge surrounding career readiness and their ability to perform key skills related to employment. Among specific examples are:

- 50% increase in those who were aware of what employers look for on a job application or resume.
- 49% increase in those who felt prepared for a job interview.

Significant increases in their knowledge and skills related to vocational discovery. Examples include:

- 19% increase in those who were aware of careers connected to their skills, interests and experiences.
- 31% increase in those who knew the requirements for success in a career in which they were interested.

“I have learned to take leadership, be really creative, give a good sales pitch and just kind of be your own person and make your own business. I think when you are younger and start managing money, you’ll be more successful.”

- Branch County youth entrepreneurship participant and business owner

Desire to Help Classmates Leads to Successful Business Model

Nine year-old Kahmora Kennedy, a 4-H Tech Wizards participant in Detroit, is a budding entrepreneur who has already earned statewide recognition for her creative business idea. As a student at a multi-lingual school, Kahmora had a wonderful idea to help her fellow classmates learn to read and speak English: she would author her own book that would be translated into the languages spoken by her peers. Her teachers will support her plan by translating the material, while her younger sister Jaya will help illustrate the book. Once completed, Kahmora plans to sell the book for a reasonable price and donate part of her proceeds to local causes in her Hamtramck community. Her creative idea and heartfelt mission to help her classmates was recently awarded the title of best new business idea at the Detroit Children’s Business Fair in October 2016.

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