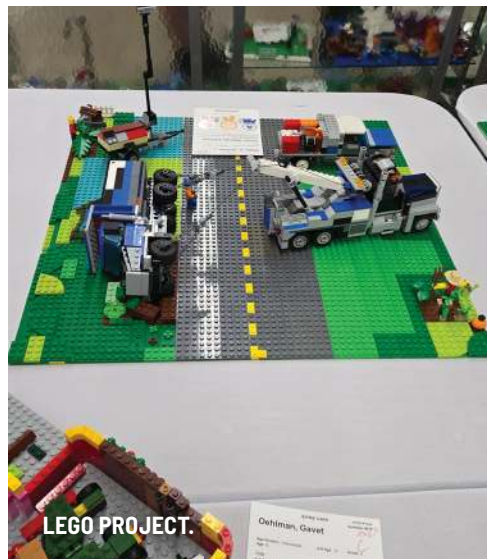




FOODS PROJECT.



LEGO PROJECT.



SEWING PROJECT.

## Opportunities Abound in Porter County 4-H for All Youth—Farm or No Farm

■ BY CHERYL WOOTEN-WILCOX | PHOTOS BY JENNIFER MYERS

Jennifer Myers, the 4-H Youth Development Educator from Purdue Extension Porter County, wants to spread the word: you don't have to live on a farm to enjoy everything 4-H has to offer. "4-H was founded in 1902 for the farming community, but we've evolved over time," says Myers. "Now, we're reaching more of the urban population as well as the farming communities."

For those who may think they need acres of land or a barn to participate, Myers, a former 4-H'er herself, is proof otherwise. "I was a kid who lived in town and didn't think I could join 4-H because I wasn't able to do livestock. But I discovered there are so many other opportunities," she shares. From sewing, photography, baking and BBQ to computer

science, music and even Lego projects, Myers emphasizes that "there's a project for every interest."

Myers also points out that there are unique opportunities for kids who do have pets at home, such as the small animals project. "If any kids have a pet bird, chinchilla, guinea pig, rabbit, poultry, spider, or crab, they can bring it to the county fair and show it," she explains. The 4-H program also offers projects for cats and dogs, focusing on areas like health, grooming, and personality, with workshops for obedience, agility, and showmanship. "My niece is a cat owner, and I've encouraged her to try the cat project. It's a great opportunity for kids to showcase their pets."



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STEM-focused projects are also available, including model bridge-building and robotics for those interested in science and engineering. "We offer a lot to kids who want to explore these fields, with hands-on learning experiences," Myers says.

Enrollment for 4-H begins on October 1, with a deadline of January 15 to ensure a better experience. "After January, superintendents hold workshops with kids from across the county. These workshops offer hands-on learning to help prepare for the county fair," Myers notes. Kids grades 3 -12 can participate in regular 4-H while younger children in grades K - 2 can take part in mini 4-H. Registration is only \$20 per child.

For more information or to enroll, visit the Porter County 4-H website or their Facebook page. As Myers concludes, "There are so many ways to get involved—no farm required!"

CHECK OUT PORTER COUNTY 4-H AT [PORTERCOUNTY4H.ORG](http://PORTERCOUNTY4H.ORG) FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO VIEW THEIR CALENDAR OR [FACEBOOK.COM/PORTERCOUNTY4H](https://www.facebook.com/PORTERCOUNTY4H).



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