



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension

Why 4-H Camps?

"I learned how to overcome my fears and work together well with a group to solve problems."

— 4-H camper

"I have a conviction that a few weeks spent in an organized summer camp may be of more value educationally than a whole year of formal school work."

— Charles Eliot, former
Harvard University
President

4-H camps have a positive impact on youth

Each summer, more than 8,000 children master new skills, gain confidence, feel what it's like to be part of a community and find meaning through service¹ — all at 4-H camps across New York State.

The 4-H camping system offers young people, ages 5-17, the chance to explore **educational activities and classes in more than 25 subject areas**, including swimming, outdoor living, environmental studies, kayaking, astronomy and drama. These opportunities are **open to all interested youth**, not just current 4-H members.

New York's nine 4-H camps feature

innovative programs, **distinct natural surroundings, skilled staff**, facilities that are annually accredited by the state Health Department and innovative programs.

Each camp connects to the **resources of Cornell University** for new curriculum, cutting-edge research and experiential learning ideas. 4-H Camps also have a **positive economic impact** on the communities where they're located. New York State's 4-H camps contribute more than \$2.5 million to local economies in payroll, material purchases and contract services. The biggest impact of 4-H camps can't be measured in dollars and cents. The relationships, natural environments and carefully planned programs at camp can be life changing for a young person.



Research shows that the camping experience helps kids learn social skills like making friends and getting along with others.

Why the camp experience is unlike any other

In 2005, the American Camp Association undertook the first large-scale study to measure outcomes of the **camping experience**². In all, more than 5,000 families took part¹, completing surveys before and after camp and also six months following camp. Camp counselors and directors also offered feedback.

The results provide scientific evidence that camp is a **positive force** in youth development. Results suggest that a stay at camp benefits a child in the following ways:

- Children become **more confident** and experience increased self-esteem.
- Children develop more social skills that help them make new friends.
- Children grow **more independent** and show more leadership qualities.
- Children become more **adventurous** and willing to try new things.

Beyond the quantitative results, study participants offered testimony often highlighting the positive influence of counselors, campers, and the variety of activities.



Connect now
to great 4-H
resources



National Directory of 4-H Materials
HEAD, HEART, HANDS, HEALTH



Check it out at: www.4-hdirectory.org

1. New York State 4-H. *New York State 4-H Camps Annual Report*. 2011.
2. American Camp Association. *Youth Development Outcomes of the Camping Experience*. 2005.
3. New York State 4-H. *New York State 4-H Camps Annual Report*. 2012.

<http://nys4h.cce.cornell.edu>

Developing confidence—one camp’s story

“The Young Women’s Adventure Camp made such an impact on my daughter. She came home very obviously more confident in herself, and who she is.”

— Myles A. Lynch, parent

In 1931, 53 boys and girls gathered at Torrey Beach on Canandaigua Lake in Ontario County to enjoy the outdoors together. Today, 4-H Camp Bristol Hills offers a ropes course, archery, horseback riding, rocketry and environmental education to more than 800 youth each summer. The activities may have changed, but one thing remains the same - camp provides **enriching and fun experiences for kids.**

“As a camp, we give children the opportunity to develop **independence** and learn how to live

outside the family; we give them responsibility, and we give them the chance to **try something new** and learn that they can excel in something they never had the chance to try before,” said Tim Davis, Extension Issues Leader for Ontario County.

Responding to the need for better interest and performance in science, Cornell University’s Department of Food Science and 4-H Camp Bristol Hills collaborated to provide a week-long food safety - and food science-related

summer camping experience to youth in grades six through ten. Research has found, “the very nature of camp provides an...environment, where no one is passing or failing-and the academic pressure is off. For some kids, going to camp is the first time they are able to connect what they are taught in the school classroom with real-life learning; for many, it is the first time the material makes sense”³ (Tyrrell, 2012).



4-H camps help shape the character of young people through experiences of:

- Independence
- Belonging
- Generosity
- Mastery

4-H camps connects kids to Cornell

As New York’s land grant university, Cornell University offers programmatic and administrative infrastructure for 4-H youth programs across the state.

4-H camps also tap into Cornell’s

resources and research to develop curriculum, plan programs and train staff.

For campers, 4-H camp often opens the door to other Cornell connections, whether kids join their

local 4-H club or take part in a 4-H after school program, both of which use curriculum and resources developed by 4-H educational staff at Cornell and at Cornell Cooperative Extension offices throughout the state.

About New York’s 4-H camps

New York’s nine residential 4-H camps are located across the state. For more information, visit: nys4h.cce.cornell.edu

Bristol Hills Specialty classes in: horsemanship, archery, ropes courses, teen program, and leadership. Shorter sessions for younger campers. Day campers accepted. Sessions for ages 5-15.

Dorothy P. Flint Experiences include: canoeing, farming, horsemanship, kayaking, and ropes courses. Off-season programs available. Weekly sessions for kids entering grades 4-10.

Hidden Valley Campers learn canoeing, horsemanship, archery, teen trips, and leadership.

Weekly sessions for ages 8-17.

Overlook Opportunities include a ropes course, sailing, backpacking and canoeing trips, as well as shooting sports. Shorter session for ages 6-8. Day campers accepted. Weekly sessions for ages 8-17.

Owahta Activities include: canoeing.



biking, and backpacking. Weekly sessions for ages 8-15.

Peconic Dunes Campers learn: environmental stewardship, kayaking, and marine sciences. Day campers accepted. Weekly sessions for ages 6-16.

Shankitunk Camper activities include: biking, horsemanship, ropes course, and leadership. Weekly sessions for ages 8-16.

Wabasso Activities include: ropes course, dance, and gymnastics. Shorter sessions for ages 6-8. Day campers accepted. Weekly sessions for ages 8-16.

Wyomoco Campers learn: animal care, clowning, painting, photography, and horsemanship. Weekly sessions for ages 8-16.

<http://nys4h.cce.cornell.edu>

For more information

To learn more about NYS 4-H camps, visit:

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