The term “coding” covers a wide variety of topics in computing and other sciences. Coding often feels like learning a whole new language. For example, HTML stands for HyperText Markup Language. HTML is the text format that webpages use to make words, pictures, and anything else that might appear on a website.

4-H students at Case Middle School are working on creating and programming their own webpages, including content and design. They were introduced to programming with Ozobots, in which they drew lines of different color patterns to program the Ozobots to change color, or move in different directions. From there, they are working on how to develop and design webpages. Students are learning how to program lines of code into a webpage, creating different outcomes in the appearance and content of their websites. Making a line of text appear in italics, for example, uses the code of “<i>” for the line of text in italics, and closes with “</i>”. This is what you would see if you looked at the back end of a webpage. The symbol <i> tells the webpage that any text following it will appear in italics. However, not everything on the page should be in italics, so </i> tells the webpage that anything following that symbol will not be in italics.

Every line of code requires an opening and closing to let the webpage know when to start and stop the action that is coded into the language.

The students are excited to dive into coding. The students are planning to create web pages where they can post their own original stories, art, and comics. Following that, they will all be making a “Choose Your Own Adventure” game using a series of webpages and hyperlinks; a final challenge to test their web design skills.

To learn more of these symbols and about coding and web design, please visit: https://www.interaction-design.org/literature.

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The Belleville Henderson 4-H Afterschool program is starting out the year exploring topics related to agriculture. The students are learning about the variety of agriculture and farmers. They started the unit by discussing everyday products and food, while tracing them back to their agricultural origin. They helped to create an agriculture web page to display for the rest of the program and school. This included everything from milk, steak and eggs, to cotton towels, lumber, and sports balls.
The students also worked in groups to draw pictures of how they envision the different types of farms, including dairy, chickens, pig, bees, vegetable, fruit, fibers, and forestry. This artwork will finish off the display board for the rest of the school and community to see. The goal is to help them understand that farming and agriculture have a big impact on their everyday lives.

Throughout the unit, the students will have a variety of hands-on activities to increase their agriculture experiences. They will have the opportunity to learn with CeCe the milking cow, by making butter, and by incubating chicken eggs. They will also learn about how important pollinators are to our food supply. The FFA students will support a variety of these projects which will help connect them to agriculture and understand where their food comes from.

Agriculture is a career and lifestyle that impacts local economies, as well as people around the world. There are many good resources to learn about what is involved in bringing food and fibers to the people who need them. The website https://www.agclassroom.org/ny/, has a variety of resources for teachers and students, including fun games that teach about different aspects of agriculture. The 4-H curriculum, “Afterschool Agriculture,” has many interesting activities exploring how to grow your food, healthy snacks, soil, and creating fun projects, just to name a few. https://4-h.org/parents/curriculum/afterschool-agriculture/

Are You Prepared for an Apocalypse?
By Rachel Thomas, 4-H Afterschool Program Coordinator

You might not need to be prepared for an apocalypse, but it is important to be prepared for natural disasters, especially hazardous winter weather. There are many ways in which one can prepare for these types of events.

The first way to prepare for a natural disaster is to gather a “go bag” for each person in the household. This bag is a collection of things that would be necessary to grab if evacuation from the residence was necessary. Some of these items might include, but are not limited to, bottled water and nonperishable food (such as granola bars), copies of important documents in a waterproof container (such as insurance cards/certificates, photo ID cards, proof of address, copies of marriage and birth certificates, copies of social security cards, list of medications with dosages and reason for taking, etc.), flashlight, radio with extra batteries, contact...
information for the entire household and members of their support network, cash in small bills, back-up medical equipment such as glasses, first-aid kit (to include bandages, cold compresses, hand warmers, gauze, medical tape, basic meds, etc.), supplies for your pets (food, leashes, vaccination records, medications, etc. If your pet has a lot of items, consider packing a special “go bag” for them.), and portable cell phone chargers. Your go bag should be sturdy, water resistant, and easy to handle, such as a backpack or duffel bag.

Another way to prepare for a natural disaster is to put together an Emergency Supply Kit for in your home. This is in case you are stuck without power and help and must shelter in place or survive within your own home for many days. This kit should be in a water resistant container and be stored in an easily accessible cupboard or cabinet in the home. Some items to include, but not limited to, are a gallon of drinking water for every member in the household per day, nonperishable, ready to eat food, first-aid kit, flashlights and extra batteries, a radio with extra batteries, glow sticks, whistle or bell, back-up medical equipment if possible (such as oxygen, medication, hearing aids, glasses, facemasks, gloves, etc.), child care supplies, blankets or sleeping bags, extra mittens, socks, scarves, hats, and raingear. It is important to make it a point to check the kit every 6 months to ensure that it is up to date, food is still safe to eat, and batteries are still in working condition.

Although you may think it will never happen to you, it is always important to be prepared for anything to come. Set aside a day to pack go bags and an emergency supply kit with your family, and discuss what to do in case of an evacuation or shelter in place situation.

For more information on preparing for emergencies, visit https://www1.nyc.gov/site/em/ready/new-york.page. To read more about prepping for winter weather, visit https://www1.nyc.gov/site/em/ready/winter-weather-prep.page, and to see a more detailed list of items for a go bag or emergency supply kit, visit https://www1.nyc.gov/site/em/ready/get-prepared.page.

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By Katie Steele,

4-H Health at Beaver River - An Apple a Day...

By Katie Steele, 4-H Afterschool Program Educator

Students at Beaver River 4-H Afterschool Program have busy settling into a new school year and a new school routine. Much like last year, the 4-H Afterschool Program strives to offer a wide range of programming that will meet the interests of each student. STEM challenges have always been a hit with students big and small, so going into the first week of program, this seemed like the perfect topic to cover. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. STEM isn’t a new concept by any means, but its only become popular in talk and implementation in schools in the last decade.

Students began the week doing STEM Challenges. These STEM challenges had to be done only using the back to school supplies provided. Students found this new criteria fun and fitting for this time of year. The students have so far completed two back to school STEM challenges, all using the same back to school supplies. The supplies available were three prong folders, masking tape, number 2 pencils, popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners, markers, paper clips, binder clips, paper, scissors, rubber bands, paper bags, and of course apples! The main objective this week was to protect the apple in various ways.

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The students first challenge was called Apples Afar. In this challenge, students had to construct a tower using only the available school supplies, make the tallest tower, and put an apple on top of the tower. The team who built not only the tallest tower, but whose apple stayed in place, won the challenge. This proved quite challenging, and forced the students to work together and really brainstorm ideas to make a stronger structure. The second challenge students participated in, was called Apples-A-Head. In this challenge, students had to work as a team and design a hat contraption that would hold the apple in place on top of their head. The apple could not be held down with any material like tape or rubber bands, and had to just sit in the hat the students designed. After the student teams constructed their designs, each team chose one student to wear the hat contraption AND do a relay with the other teams! The students were caught off guard with the announcement of a relay, but were thrilled at the added excitement and mystery of what team had made the most suitable hat to hold the apple in place. Students and educators alike, are looking forward to the upcoming weeks of program, and the continuation of these back to school STEM challenges. If you would like more information on back to school supply STEM challenges visit https://www.feelgoodteaching.com/2017/07/back-to-school-stem-challenge-apples-2.html.

Team Building and Mindfulness
By Amy Wright, 4-H Afterschool Program Coordinator

Providing students with the tools to be successful in school can be a difficult task. Studies show that students who have strong peer to peer relationships, adults that encourage positive behavior, and are involved in afterschool programs are more likely to be successful in school. It is also important to teach students how to reduce stress and improve their concentration. All students in the LaFargeville Afterschool Program have spent their first couple of weeks of programming focusing on ways to be successful during the school day and in the afterschool program.

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Using researched based curricula from 4-H’s Project Adventure and GEM Mindfulness, the students were able to learn about team building, positive relationships, how to reduce their stress and improve their concentration. Combining these curricula and exploring it with the students, provided them with tools for success that they may not have otherwise been able to receive during the school day. One 5th grade teacher at LaFargeville said that her 4-H students “shared the Mindfulness techniques they learned with other students in the class and she hopes that they will continue to utilize them.”

The educators and students will take time once a month to review the skills they have learned and add more to help continue to encourage positive relationships and mindfulness.