

## CCE Monroe 4-H Program Update March 2026

### Program Highlights –

- **Freedom Scholars Learning Center:** Lily continues to collaborate with the Seed Sowers program, where youth have been exploring food systems through hands-on projects such as building terrariums, growing microgreens, imagining undiscovered insects, and creating weather reports—activities that help scholars deepen their understanding of how natural systems connect to the food we grow and eat.
- **Library Program:** The Spring/Summer 4-H program flyer is now available for libraries and partner organizations to support scheduling and outreach for upcoming youth programming. Reach out to Leslie Pude [lap276@cornell.edu](mailto:lap276@cornell.edu) with questions.
- **Dairy in the Classroom:** Students across Monroe County recently explored food safety through a hands-on engineering challenge, designing, building, and testing their own coolers while learning how temperature control helps keep dairy products safe to eat.
- **It's Ag. Literacy Month!!:** The 4-H Youth Development team is visiting K–3 classrooms across Monroe County to read *Seasons on the Farm* and lead a hands-on agriculture activity. With support from community volunteers and the Monroe County Farm Bureau, classrooms also receive a copy of the book for their library.

### Strategic Plan Update –

#### **1.3 Program Effectiveness- Assess current programs for pertinence, reach, sustainability, and impact.**

Leslie is assessing current 4-H club programs for relevance, reach, and sustainability to ensure effective use of resources and continued delivery of impactful, research-based experiences that meet the evolving needs of Monroe County youth and families.

#### **2.1 Resource Management-Padlet**

Jessica is utilizing her expertise and digital tools, such as Padlet, to share activities and resources with classroom teachers, enhancing integration of 4-H concepts in the classroom and with families and caregivers, sustaining cross-sector programming through efficient use of available resources.

#### **4.1 Collaborations & Partnerships**

Lily is working to leverage our relationships with current partners and identify new collaborators to address gaps and opportunities.

### **BOD Engagement Opportunity –**

- **4-H Enrollment:** Enrollment and re-enrollment for the 2025–26 4-H program year is still open. Families and caregivers seeking information about club opportunities may contact [monroe4h@cornell.edu](mailto:monroe4h@cornell.edu).
- **Community Engagement:** Board members and community partners are encouraged to follow the [Monroe County 4-H Youth Development](#) Facebook page for program updates, highlights, and announcements.

### **Story of Celebration or Success –**

Mrs. Maher’s class at Indian Landing Elementary recently brought home statewide recognition, earning 3rd place in the 2025 New York Agriculture in the Classroom Mac and Cheese Challenge. Their recipe, “Mrs. Maher’s Cheesy Delight,” stood out during a record-breaking year for the competition, which included participation from more than 260 classrooms across New York State. The challenge invites students to explore dairy, nutrition, and creativity by developing their own macaroni and cheese recipes while learning about the role of dairy in New York agriculture.

This achievement highlights the enthusiasm and innovation of Monroe County educators and youth who continue to engage deeply with agriculture and food education. Mrs. Maher’s students proudly summed up their learning with a memorable slogan: “Avoid disease, eat more cheese!” Their success reflects the impact of hands-on agricultural literacy experiences that connect classrooms to New York’s vibrant dairy industry.



Students in Mrs. Maher’s class perfect their mac and cheese recipe and say “Cheese” for a class photo.