



April 7, 2020

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Dear 4-H members, families, volunteers and supporters,

It is with a heavy heart that I share this news with you. Due to ongoing health concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the decision has been made to cancel all Ohio State University Extension in-person programming through July 6. This includes all 4-H programs, activities, and events. Additionally, we've made the very difficult decision to cancel all 4-H camps thru August 31. Although in-person programming is cancelled, we will continue to offer virtual 4-H experiences.

We know this is an incredible disappointment and recognize how much everyone looks forward to our cherished 4-H summer events. As 4-H professionals committed to providing positive youth development programming, we share your sense of loss.

Given available information, we anticipate the next few weeks and months will continue to be critical times for stemming the spread of the COVID-19 virus. It is our duty to keep ourselves and those we serve safe through the education we provide and the modeling of safety-conscious behaviors. We do not want to get to the other side of this pandemic and wish that we had done more to keep our future generation of leaders safe and healthy.

While we are making decisions regarding the youth events we organize and manage (such as camps and 4-H project judging), we are deferring to local decision-makers and Governor DeWine's administration on the events owned by others, such as county fairs. Our decision to cancel in-person 4-H activities and events through July 6 and summer camps, should not automatically imply that local county fairs are also canceled at this time. Please keep in mind that 4-H and our FFA colleagues support the education and development of youth, but the decision about whether fairs will occur is in the hands of others. This continues to be an evolving situation that will require some negotiation and monitoring depending on decisions. We will be ready should fairs move forward and to pivot if they are cancelled.

As we work through the impact of these decisions for 4-H activities and events in the weeks ahead, county OSU Extension 4-H professionals will share important updates and information with you as we develop and provide new online opportunities. We know the experiences will be different than we had hoped, yet we remain committed to working together to grow future generations of true leaders.

Yours in service to 4-H,

*Kirk Blair*

Assistant Director, OSU Extension 4-H Youth Development