

A photograph of two children, a boy and a girl, looking upwards with interest in a science classroom. The boy is wearing a blue shirt and the girl is wearing a grey shirt. In the background, there is a red metal rack holding various laboratory glassware and equipment.

YOUTH, FAMILY, COMMUNITIES

STEM initiatives inspire youth

SPARKING NEW INTERESTS, POSSIBLE CAREERS IN VITAL FIELDS

Demand for people trained in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines continues to rise. To prepare youth from all walks of life for today's evolving workforce, Extension programs nationwide are sparking participants' interest in STEM topics, helping them understand the importance of those fields in everyday life and introducing them to possible college and career paths.

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- In **California**, Latino youth participating in the Juntos program go to a Summer Academy, which features STEM lessons as well as college and career readiness workshops. Before attending the academy, 42% of students said they were planning to attend college. Afterward, that number jumped to 95%.
- In **Maine**'s 4-H STEM Ambassador program, 120 college students in 2018 volunteered 2,400 hours to lead STEM activities for more than 1,000 youth ages 8 to 14.
- Also in **Maine**, Extension personnel and teenage mentors offer hands-on STEM activities to children living in public housing. The program, called Maine 4-H Community Central, reached more than 7,900 school-age participants in a four-year period.
- **Indiana** 4-H'ers receive STEM lessons through various programs. In a survey, a majority of participants said they learned more about how science can be used to solve everyday problems. Many also reported they would like to one day have a job in a STEM field.
- Extension agents in **Kentucky** incorporate STEM learning opportunities into traditional 4-H livestock projects. Students compete in skillathon contests that test their knowledge of livestock breeds, anatomy, nutrition, equipment, meat processing, performance and more. They visit farms and businesses as part of their preparation for the contests.

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Prepared by the National Impacts Database Communications Subcommittee, supported by ESCOP, ECOP and USDA/NIFA.

02/2020

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