



Igniting Scientific Curiosity: 4-H Program Coordinators Empower Students with Hands-On Learning

Witnessing the spark of curiosity ignite within students' minds is a truly remarkable experience. Samantha Griffin and Tyler Lidgard, MSU Extension 4-H Program Coordinators for Kent County, recently orchestrated, along with GRPS teachers Ms. Warmuskerken, Ms. Durso and Ms. Keogan, an inspiring initiative that not only ignited curiosity but also taught and applied crucial scientific skills.

On January 31st, 2024, Samantha and Tyler delivered three incubators to Brookside Elementary School and Union High School, setting the stage for a hands-on exploration of embryology using chicken eggs. This initiative aimed to immerse students in the fascinating world of life sciences, engaging them in observation, measurement, prediction, communication, data collection, and problem-solving.

At Brookside Elementary, Ms. Warmuskerken's 2nd-grade classroom buzzed with excitement as students eagerly anticipated the arrival of real live chicks. As days passed, the children watched as chicks emerged from their shells, each one welcomed into the world with a name chosen by the class. Through careful observation and interaction, students not only witnessed the growth and development but also documented their findings. Students reported their findings and observations on colorful posters.

Despite encountering some surprises, such as only three chicks hatching due to infertility, students experienced first-hand how to apply scientific skills. They identified unique characteristics and behaviors in each chick, collected important and accurate data and drew meaningful conclusions.

Meanwhile, at Union High School, under the guidance of Ms. Durso and Mr. Keogan, students eagerly engaged in hands-on learning that extended beyond traditional classroom boundaries. Through this immersive experience, they not only deepened their understanding of embryology but also sharpened their problem-solving abilities as they navigated the complexities of the incubation process. Perhaps one of the students who participated in this project will now consider a career in life sciences.

As 4-H Program Coordinators for Kent County, Samantha and Tyler play a pivotal role in providing resources and learning opportunities to students and educators alike. This project is one of many that exemplifies their commitment to supporting hands-on, experiential learning. By collaborating with partner organizations such as schools, Samantha and Tyler ensure that students from diverse backgrounds have access to enriching educational experiences. Moreover, their efforts promote equity by offering equal opportunities for all students to engage in science education regardless of their socio-economic status or geographical location.

To learn more about MSU Extension and 4-H in Kent County, visit www.canr.msu.edu/kent/4-h/