

# 2024–2025

Defiance County Health Department  
Youth Health Assessment

McMaster Fellows

Dr. Olivia Lozar, Assistant Professor of Exercise Science  
Dr. Jeanna Tran, Assistant Professor of Exercise Science

This McMaster initiative builds upon an ongoing collaboration with the Defiance County Health Department to better understand and improve the health of local youth. During the 2024–2025 academic year, McMaster scholars will generate reports for the ten schools in the Defiance County school system (five middle schools and five high schools).

Students will begin by reviewing data from the most recent Youth Health Assessment (YHA), which was collected in spring 2024 by Dr. Lozar and Dr. Tran with the health department. Using this dataset, each team of scholars will analyze the results for two assigned schools, identifying both positive health trends (such as physical activity or safe driving habits) and areas of concern (such as screen time, mental health, or substance use).

After identifying these trends, scholars will connect their findings to evidence-based health promotion programs that have already been developed and proven effective. Examples include the *Drive Smart Program* to address texting and driving, *Let's Eat Healthy* to encourage positive nutrition habits, and *Expect Respect* to combat bullying and support mental well-being. By aligning local needs with established resources, students will create a menu of practical recommendations for schools and community stakeholders.

The project not only provides valuable insights for Defiance County but also gives students hands-on experience in public health research, data analysis, and program planning. Their work aims to empower school administrators with concrete strategies to promote healthier behaviors among youth, while also giving McMaster scholars the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to their community.

McMaster Scholars

Lexi Coward, Senior, Exercise Science  
Jalynn Parrett, Senior, Exercise Science

Addy Allen, Junior, Exercise Science  
Alex Jung, Junior, Exercise Science  
Christa Phillips, Junior, Exercise Science  
Payton Switzer, Junior, Exercise Science  
McKenna Walker, Junior, Exercise Science  
Connor Gephart, Sophomore, Psychology  
Anna Emswiler, Sophomore, Exercise Science  
Maddie Gruggenbiller, Sophomore, Exercise Science  
Emma Rodgers, Sophomore, Exercise Science  
Addison Martinez, Freshman, Exercise Science  
Alex Moritz, Freshman, Exercise Science  
Kate Suter, Freshman, Exercise Science  
Tevin Lewis-Johnson, Freshman, Exercise Science