



State of New York County of Broome Government Offices

Broome County Health Department

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Whitney Point Central School District Awarded National Agriculture Classroom Grant

WHITNEY POINT, NY – The Broome County Health Department is proud to announce that Whitney Point Central School District (CSD) has been selected as a recipient of the \$500 Classroom Grant from the National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization. Sponsored by CoBank Financial Services, this competitive grant program received over 160 applications nationwide, with only 40 grants awarded across the United States¹.

This grant will support educational initiatives aimed at enhancing students' understanding of agriculture, providing them with valuable hands-on learning opportunities and fostering a deeper connection to the agricultural community.

Brooke Traver, Public Health Educator for the Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC) Grant at the Broome County Health Department collaborated closely with Damon Maricle, Agriculture Educator and Future Farmers of America Advisor, and Murphee Hayes, Director of Athletics and Health & Physical Education, to develop a compelling and impactful application that ultimately secured these funds. Their combined efforts highlight a shared commitment to enriching educational experiences and promoting the importance of agriculture within the Whitney Point Central School District.

The CHSC grant is actively supporting the facilitation of four engaging Agriculture in the Classroom lessons at the Tioughnioga Riverside Academy: *Make Your Own Worm Bin*, *The Rotten Truth*, *It's a Dirty Job*, and *Fungi Multiplication*. Funds provided by the Classroom Grant, along with additional donations provided by local community partners, have made it possible to provide all necessary materials needed to bring these interactive lessons to life.

Damon's passion for agriculture stems from his deep-rooted connection to the field. With a "background of having a farm, growing up with maple production and dairy farm/operation," Damon now brings that wealth of experience into the classroom, sharing insights from his childhood to inspire his students.

Highlighting that many of his students live in a rural area, Damon encourages his students to draw on their own experiences as they commonly "live on a farm, work on a dairy farm, or have gardens" at

home. He invites them to “pitch in to be part of the teaching process,” creating a dynamic and hands-on learning environment.

For more information on the Creating Healthy Schools and Communities grant contact Brooke Traver at the Broome County Health Department at 607.778.2878

CHSC is a five-year initiative funded by the New York State Department of Health to establish and support healthy behaviors in high-needs communities. The New York State Department of Health Division of Chronic Disease Prevention implements evidence-based, evidenced-informed, and innovative public health strategies in order to support New Yorkers to live healthier lives and eliminate health disparities by reducing the incidence and burden of chronic diseases and conditions For more information, visit

https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/obesity/prevention_activities/chsc/

¹ *CHS Foundation and CoBank launch 2024 classroom grant for innovative agricultural education projects. (2024, November 7). iowafarmbureau.com. <https://www.iowafarmbureau.com/Article/CHS-Foundation-and-CoBank-launch-2024-classroom-grant-for-innovative-agricultural-education-projects>*