**AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM**

The Eagle Connection (After School Program) is extremely grateful for the continued support of our program by the Town of Eden. Without your help, we would not be able to sustain this program, which is now in its 14th year of providing after school and summer enrichment for the children in our community.

We are anticipating that our funding will remain quite similar to previous years, with approximately 40% of our total budget coming from the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant. The other 60% needs to be raised through program fees, donations, grants, and contributions from the school and town. The 21st Century Grant that we receive stipulates that, “No child will be denied access to our program due to an inability to pay”. Our program provides scholarships to attend a 10-week after school class to families that apply for childcare subsidy and are denied. Last year we awarded 134 scholarships free of charge.

Once again the Eagle Connection renewed its license as a child care facility through the State of Vermont. This allows us to receive subsidy funds for the children and families that need assistance, food reimbursement for the daily snacks children receive, and access to state grants. During the school year our program operates Monday through Thursday from 2:30 pm until 5:00 pm. During the summer the Eagle Connection runs a six-week “camp”, Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, where children receive breakfast, snack, and lunch during the day, as well as time to work on academics, enrichment activities, and multiple field trips within Lamoille County and beyond.

Each session of our program offers a wide variety of enrichment classes such as cooking, sewing, rocketry, cheerleading, outdoor activities, arts & crafts, photography, building & design, robotics, edible art, homework club, and many more. Our wide variety of activities and the diversity of the teachers allow every student to find at least one activity that really interests them. Our attendance rate climbed for the 2nd year in a row, and we expect this trend to continue.

During the summer, it is our main objective to offer a program that engages children in fun and enriching activities. However, we also aim to reduce student’s summer learning loss by using academic workbooks and lessons that review what children learned in the previous school year, as well as a preview of what will be expected of them in the upcoming year. This past summer our students went on a field trip at least twice a week, once to Lake Eden to swim and fish, and the other to locations such as the Northwoods Stewardship Center, Pizza on Main, Bijou Theater, Eden Dog Sledding, Ben & Jerry’s, Waterbury Reservoir, Jay Peak, Berry Creek Farm, Sand Bar State Park, Ed Weed Fish Culture Station, and the Lamoille County Field Days.

Our budget is extremely limited. We have had to increase the number of staff members, and the hours they work, to accommodate for a rise in student attendance. However, our main funding source, the 21CCLC funds, cannot be increased during the current five-year funding cycle which was based on previous, reduced, amounts of students attending our program, thus creating areas of deficit. A lack of funding will ultimately impact the children in our community the most, and will make it unlikely to sustain the momentum we have gained over the past two years.

The $4000 that the Town of Eden has financially supported our program within the past has been and will continue to be imperatives in continuing to offer high quality programs for all the elementary school children in Eden. Without this necessary support from the town, the Eagle Connection would be extremely challenged and likely unable to continue running an after school program with the quality that we currently have.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.