**AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM**

Eden’s After School Program (ECS Connections) 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 sixteenth year of providing after school and summer enrichment for the children in our community.

In our next fiscal year, we are anticipating that our funding will remain 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”.

ECS Connections has 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 child care assistance, food reimbursement for the daily meals children receive, and access to state grants. During the school year our program operates Monday through Thursday from 2:40 pm until 5:00 pm. During the summer the Eagle Connection runs a summer “camp”, Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, where children receive breakfast, snack, lunch, 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, Gymnastics, Arts & Crafts, STEM activities like Tinkering, outdoor activities like Gardening and Growing up Wild, free-choice classes, and many more. Our wide variety of activities and the diversity of the teachers allow every student to find at least one, if not multiple activities that really interest them. Our attendance rate climbed for the 4th year in a row, and we expect this trend to continue.

During the summer, our main objective is to offer a program that engages children in fun and enriching activities. We also aim to reduce each student’s summer learning loss by reviewing academics in fun and practical ways. This past summer our field trip took our students all over northern Vermont, visiting Ben & Jerry’s, Waterbury Reservoir, WCAX Studio, Oakledge Park in Burlington, WLVB, Pizza on Main, the Bijou Movie Theater, Lake Eden, Shelburne Farms, Biking the Lamoille County Rail Trail, Burton Island State Park, Vermont Lake Monsters baseball game, Lamoille County Field Days, Lake Memphremagog, Harvey’s Lake Beach, and more.

Unfortunately, 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 a much smaller previous student enrollment, thus creating areas of great 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 three years.

The $4000 support from the Town of Eden has been and will continue to be imperative in continuing to offer high quality programs for all of the elementary school children in Eden. Without this necessary support from the town, ECS Connection would be extremely challenged and likely unable to continue running an after school program and summer camp, especially with the quality that we currently have. Therefore, we formally request the town to appropriate $4000 for our program during the 2018-19 fiscal year.

From all of our community’s children, thank you very much for your previous and continued support of this extremely beneficial program!