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Bristol Public Works and Bristol Public Schools Need the Community's Help to Raise Funds to Bring Outdoor Classrooms to Bristol Schools

BRISTOL, CONN., (November 27, 2019) – Outdoor Classrooms – A Work of Heart is a program which will provide Bristol students the opportunity to get outside and learn about nature and how to take care of the environment. In the spring and summer of 2019, the City of Bristol Department of Public Works (DPW) partnered with Bristol Public Schools (BPS) to launch **Bristol Gardens – A Work of Heart** in 13 Bristol schools. The mission for this project was to give hands-on experience to students through creating and growing their own gardens each season. The gardens are maintained by the students along with the assistance of parents from each schools' PTA/PTO.

In order to extend learning opportunities for the gardens in each school, DPW and BPS are working in partnership with Sustainable CT to create additional outdoor learning spaces in the spring of 2020 with a goal of raising \$10,000 by December 31, 2019. Every donation made by December 31, 2019 will be matched 100% by Sustainable CT. DPW and BPS are asking for the community's help to meet the fundraising goal deadline. To date over \$2,500 has been raised – with the end of the year fast approaching they are hoping the community will help to reach their goal. The funds will be used to purchase enclosed chalkboards, flexible seating, and supplies for each of the 13 outdoor classrooms.

With over 25 students per classroom, the funds raised will allow for the creation of 13 outdoor classrooms to complement the existing gardens. Over 6,000 students will receive the benefit of the extra space needed to expand hands-on learning opportunities while connecting with nature. The outdoor classrooms will give teachers the ability to go outside with their students. All subjects or curriculum can be taught in the outdoor classroom while teaching students the importance of taking care of the environment.

“Students learn best by doing. This is a perfect opportunity for them to get away from the computers and make learning fun while getting in touch with nature,” stated Lindsey Rivers, Bristol Public Works Analyst

An outdoor classroom will also be added to the Pine Lake Adventure Park, a challenge course located at Pine Lake in Bristol. This course presents participants with physical obstacles that require them to creatively problem solve in order to be successful. By installing an outdoor classroom onsite, facilitators will be able to transition students from the classroom to an outdoor environment. The space will be utilized for reviewing important safety procedures, setting goals and working with the school system’s curriculum to set learning outcomes for participants. The park is overseen by the Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services Department.

“Public-private partnerships are important components to maintain the high quality education system that we have. It is also great timing for those who are interested in making an end of the year tax deductible donation” stated Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu

For more information and to make an online donation, please visit:

<https://ioby.org/project/bristol-outdoor-classroom-work-heart>

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