I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

November 28, 2018

Contact Information
Organization Name: Green Valleys Association of SE PA, Inc.
Address: 1368 Prizer Road, Pottstown, PA 19465
Phone: 610-469-4900
Website: www.greenvalleys.org
Year Incorporated: 1964
FEIN: 23-7025192

Executive Director Name: Victoria Laubach
Executive Director E-mail: Victoria@greenvalleys.org
Board of Directors Chair Name: Allen Heist
Primary Contact Name: Dawn White
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Has your nonprofit ever applied to the Community Foundation? Yes
Has your nonprofit ever received funding from the Community Foundation? Yes, Donor Advised Fund(s)

Field/s of Interest: Environment

Organization Information:
Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served):
Green Valleys primarily serves northern Chester County in the townships of North, East, and South Coventry, East and West Vincent, East and West Pikeland, Schuylkill, Tredyffrin, East Whiteland, Charlestown, Upper Uwchlan, East and West Nantmeal, and Warwick; and the boroughs of Elverson, Spring City, and Phoenixville.

Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served: Green Valleys has approximately 1,000 members and serves the roughly 143,000-person population of northern Chester County. 5,000 individuals are engaged in our education programs annually. We work with students and teachers in the Owen J. Roberts, Phoenixville, and Pottstown School Districts, local government officials, and community volunteers.

Mission:
Green Valleys Watershed Association (GVWA) is a non-profit environmental education and watershed protection organization founded in 1964 to protect the five watersheds of northern Chester County: French, Pickering, Pigeon, and Valley Creeks and Stony Run. Our mission is to protect, preserve, and restore the natural waterways of northern Chester County. We inspire, educate, and involve our community to make a difference for this generation, and for generations to come.

Proposal Summary:
The after school, Watershed Awareness Transforming into Environmental Responsibility, or, WATER Club will be held at the Phoenixville Area and Owen J. Roberts Middle Schools, in Chester County, in spring 2019, for small groups of interested students. Participating students will embark on trips to local streams, water treatment plants, and trails to investigate aquatic wildlife, water quality issues, and take part in tree plantings as service projects. As a result of their participation in the WATER Club, the students will become more aware of, and learn actions to assist in the protection of their local aquatic resources and watersheds.

Annual Budget $455,550
83% of budget for program expenses
9% of budget for administrative expenses
8% of budget for fundraising expenses

4 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
10 # of Board Volunteers
79 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
750/yr # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources: grants, corporations, membership, Rodebaugh Trust Fund, fee for service

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: $1,200
Organization

Overview
Founded in 1964, Green Valleys Watershed Association (GVWA) is a watershed protection and environmental education non-profit organization working in the Schuylkill Highlands region of the Delaware River Watershed with a mission to protect, preserve and restore the natural waterways of northern Chester County. We inspire, educate and involve our community to make a difference for our generation and generations to come.

For over fifty years, we have successfully implemented our mission through partnerships, planning, advocacy and community engagement. We are headquartered at Welkinweir, 219-acres of permanently conserved land in East Nantmeal Township, with forests, meadows, wetlands, and ponds along the Exceptional Value Beaver Run stream. Located within the Hopewell Big Woods of the Schuylkill Highlands, Welkinweir serves as an educational center for the local community, providing unique learning and recreational opportunities for children and adults in environmental, historical, and horticultural subjects, as well as providing a sanctuary of natural beauty for the community.

GVWA’s environmental and science education programs raise awareness of both the natural world and natural resource issues - ecological and manmade - by engaging participants in hands-on activities. Programs include stream monitoring, streamside forest restoration, science, education and horticulture internships, professional workshops, green infrastructure initiatives, summer nature day camp, and programs for schools, Scouts, families and adult groups. Programs are offered at Welkinweir, in schools, and at community centers.

Distinctiveness
As an organization, Green Valleys is unique in that it has three major services: Watershed, including assessment, restoration, and advocacy; Environmental Education for all ages; and Welkinweir, an arboretum and nature sanctuary.

Goals
To date, we are continuing to work on the following, organizational goals:

In Watershed Science
Continue forested riparian buffers installations at sites in the Pickering and Valley Creek Watersheds, as well as nature-based infrastructure projects with area schools, such as rain gardens and other green measures, to deal with storm water, enhance aesthetics, and provide education.

Continue water quality monitoring under the following parameters: chemistry, microbiology, macroinvertebrate study, habitat assessment and GIS modeling. The goal is to obtain a part time staff person or part year intern for lab work, pickups, deployed sensor maintenance, and GIS work.

Continue to develop partnerships with land conservation organizations, following the William Penn Foundation initiative to monitor and assess the effects of land conservation on water quality.

Increase visibility and number of volunteers for the Schuylkill Water Stewards program, a volunteer monitoring program focusing on the watershed issues that are important to our organization and watersheds.

Increase outreach to area high schools with science and technology education programs.
In Environmental Education

Continue long-range planning to develop more coherent and unified planning for the overall mix and content of environmental education programs. Evaluate the blending of recreation, natural sciences, and STEM. Also engage stakeholders, and layout goals, timelines, and profitability strategies to build a unified package where each program is an outlet for the overall package that is used in grant proposals.

For Summer Nature Camps, continue to seek students or graduates who are science or education track students for camp counselor positions. Continue adding natural science content and STEM topics to camps. Independently develop a camp parent survey form to guide the future of the program.

Continue outreach to schools with After School Nature Awareness and Environmental Science Clubs. Expand the elementary Club into Twin Valleys Elementary Center, and increase exposure and attendance to the middle school Club at OJR and Phoenixville middle schools.

Increase participation and organizational exposure with new and additional community education programming at Welkinweir.

Acquire an Education Intern for the spring and summer, a college student with science or education major, to gain resume-building experience and bring fresh ideas to summer programs.

The broader vision of the organization is to foster an awareness of the interdependence of our quality of life and the health of our watersheds. In doing this, we inspire individuals and groups to think and act in ways which benefit the watersheds, and therefore, all of us.

Key Achievements

Some notable moments in Green Valleys’ history include:
1965-68: Successfully opposed the proposed Corps of Engineers Dam on French Creek.
1973: Purchased the Meetinghouse in Birchrunville as its first headquarters.
1977: A formal Summer Nature Camp program was formed.
1982: Obtained High Quality designation of Pigeon Creek and Scenic River designation for French Creek.
1995: Obtained Exceptional Value designation for Valley Creek.
1997: Acquired Welkinweir, the home of the Rodebaughs, original founders of Green Valleys.
1998: Exceptional Value designation obtained for French Creek.
1998 to present: Educating the public via multiple environmental and science education programs on and off-site; and water quality monitoring within four major watersheds.
Funding Request

The after school, Watershed Awareness Transforming into Environmental Responsibility, or, WATER Club program is held each spring, for 7 weeks, at the Phoenixville Area and Owen J. Roberts Middle Schools, both located in Chester County, PA. The Club is promoted, managed and evaluated by an environmental educator from Green Valleys Watershed Association, in collaboration with each school and their district.

At each school, the Club will host up to 14 students for 7 sessions. Phoenixville's target audience is 6th and 7th grade students; OJR's audience is 7th and 8th grade students. Following promotional presentations to the target grade levels, interested students must send an application to Green Valleys, which includes an explanation of why they wish to join the Club. The groups are kept small in order to effectively implement all of the planned activities, including travel time to and from the sites, within the allotted, after school time frame. A teacher liaison from each school assists the GVWA Instructor by attending all sessions.

The goals of WATER Club are to connect participating students with their fresh water resources and create awareness of water-related issues, thus motivating them to take action to protect these local resources and watersheds.

To accomplish the program goals, the students will engage in outdoor activities in activities at natural sites within the French Creek watershed, for OJR students, and the Pickering Creek watershed for Phoenixville students. Students will hike local streams to explore terrestrial wildlife, and collect and identify aquatic insects in order to assess creek health. They will visit their local water and wastewater treatment plants to learn how water is treated chemically and biologically. The students will enjoy fishing at state parks, and perform service projects, currently planned as tree plantings, on their school campuses or nearby sites.

The WATER Club is evaluated through pre and post-tests to gauge student knowledge at the start and end of the program; interactions with the students throughout the Club season; and meetings between the GVWA Club Instructor and school teacher liaisons and principals.

The Club not only benefits the participating students and their families, but the schools as well, by offering educational enrichment. The activities are interdisciplinary, covering 6th through 8th grade objectives in the both school district's curricula; as well as the state's academic standards in various subjects, including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). The Club also offers an alternative to other after-school activities, or lack thereof.

Participation in the program has, and may continue to, inspire some students to participate in future outdoor and environmental education programs and projects at area parks or organizations such as Green Valleys Watershed Association.

The ultimate goal of the after school WATER Club is for it to be a transformative experience for the students involved, as participation will influence the students’ future attitudes and interests in conservation of the natural sites in which they live and play.

Funding Needs

Outside funding to offset expenses for the WATER Club is necessary because the program is offered free of charge to students, based on the schools’ choice or policies. Therefore, Green Valleys Watershed Association must procure funds, usually through multiple donors, to cover the costs of the Instructor’s time, bus transportation for field trips, healthy snacks, tree planting project materials, and a few copying costs for promotion and registration. The total expense to implement the spring 2019 WATER Club, and future seasons of the program, at both schools, will be approximately $10,000.