

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

September 13, 2019

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: Victoria Laubach
Executive Director E-mail: Victoria@greenvalleys.org
Board of Directors Chair: Christopher Orzechowski
Primary Contact Name: Dawn White
Primary Contact E-mail: dwhite@greenvalleys.org

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 521,000-person population of northern Chester County. Over 5,000 individuals are engaged in our education and science 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:

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 2020**, for small groups of interested 6th and 7th grade 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 \$759,658

86 % of budget for program expenses

10 % of budget for administrative expenses

4 % 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: \$ 1,700

CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Nonprofit's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness

Green Valleys Watershed Association (GVWA) was founded in 1964 to protect the five major tributaries to the Schuylkill River in northern Chester County: French, Pickering, Pigeon, Valley Creeks, and Stony Run. GVWA has a 55-year history of working with residents, government, and community groups to protect the local environment through education, partnerships, planning, advocacy and community engagement. Our focus has adapted over the years to address evolving threats and issues to our region's Exceptional Value and High Quality designated streams and natural resources but our focus remains on watershed protection, environmental education, and land stewardship - from the closure of point source polluters like Knickerbocker Sanitary Landfill, to addressing non-point source pollution by working with municipalities to improve ordinances, with educational institutions to improve stormwater capture with nature-based infrastructure, or farmers to implement best management practices to keep rainwater clean and separate from animal waste.

In 1997 the organization took title to Welkinweir, the former home of GVWA founding members Everett and Grace Rodebaugh, to protect the property in perpetuity and to expand the organization's environmental and science education programming. Our educational programs have grown exponentially in the 22-years we've owned Welkinweir – summer nature camps for children ages 4 to 14, on-site interactive community nature programs for families and adults, in-school programming and on-site experiential field trips for students in 1st through 12th grades, Pennsylvania Master Naturalist and Schuylkill Water Stewards volunteer training programs for adults.

We are committed to stewarding Welkinweir in a manner that supports and embodies our mission, provides an example to residents, and offers a tranquil retreat for visitors. We have taken numerous opportunities to add to the preserved land at Welkinweir to bring the original 162-acres up to the current 224-acres, to protect the property, the adjacent contiguous forests, and the Exceptional Value, wild trout Beaver Run that flows through the properties.

We seek to educate people to enable them to be better stewards of our natural resources and empower them to act to protect those resources. We collaborate with other nonprofit organizations – from local, to regional, state and national, to strengthen our effectiveness, most notably through the Delaware River Watershed Initiative, which brings organizations across the basin together to reduce pollution, protect headwaters, and promote water-smart practices and policies.

Funding request

The after school, Watershed Awareness Transforming into Environmental Responsibility, or, WATER Club program will be held in spring 2020, 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. The program has been running in the Phoenixville Area Middle School since 2002, under different titles, but with the same focus of educating future stewards about their local watersheds.

At each school, the Club will host up to 14 students for 7 sessions. Phoenixville's target audience is 6th and 7th grade students; while OJR's audience is 7th and 8th grade students. Following promotional presentations to these grade levels,

interested students must apply through Green Valleys. 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.

Student skills, program content, and overall success of the WATER Club are evaluated with the student members through the administration of a pre and post-test and review of content throughout the Club sessions. Additionally, a follow-up meeting is held between the GVWA Club Instructor, teacher liaisons and principals to discuss the Club outcomes.

By the conclusion of the 2020 season of the WATER Club, it is expected that all of the student participants will provide evidence of increased knowledge, and some new skills through the in-field, hands-on experiences. It is also estimated that at least 70% of the students will convey what they learned to their families; and implement this new knowledge skills at home, through projects benefitting their families and community.

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 to offset expenses for the WATER Club is necessary now as the program is offered free of charge to students, based on the schools' policies. Therefore, Green Valleys Watershed Association must procure funds, usually through multiple donors, to cover our costs, which include the Instructor's time, bus transportation for field trips, healthy snacks, tree planting project materials, and a few administrative costs for promotion and registration. The total expense to implement the spring 2020 WATER Club at both schools will be approximately \$10,000.