

PROJECT TITLE: **Waupaca Community Gathering Pavilion**

INTENT:

The Chain Exploration Center Inc. is a non-profit organization operating a district instrumentality charter school and a ½-acre cooperative and donation-model community garden. From inception, a primary goal was to increase mental health for students and community members by promoting outdoor exploration and curiosity, collaborating with community through charity and mutually beneficial partnerships, and creating a campus reflective of our Waupaca community. We are writing to request \$50,000 to support this endeavor as a launch of our revitalization of the School District of Waupaca property for community-wide benefit. Founded in 2018, our organization is young. We spent the first years setting up our non-profit and designing/implementing a DPI five-star rated school, the first charter for the district. Our next step to our long-term vision is the revitalization of the property, beginning in fall 2022 with the installation of an outdoor learning pavilion serving a multitude of community and school district needs throughout the entire year. A structure built by District CTE students will provide a place to shelter from the elements all year for District students and community members, and offer a flexible space for community events and gathering opportunities that will engender a year-long calendar of events. This public space will be unique to this area of Waupaca and an additional structure open to all students of the School District of Waupaca.

IMPACT:

The health and wellness, academic, and social impact will be deep and long lasting. Studies have shown that being in nature can restore and strengthen mental health, increase emotional intelligence, improve mood, and decrease stress. Through our scheduled events calendar as well as the Pavilion's close proximity to our garden, we will promote a sense of belonging and volunteerism: play in the dirt, harvest a donation, join a summer school session, watch the birds, observe pollinators, bring a picnic, join us for yoga, or learn how to plant a container garden! Bond with us, you belong.

Accumulating research indicates that outdoor learning increases academic achievement. Students can experience learning through all of their senses—they can smell and touch their learning, enabling increased focus and engagement. Research indicates learning outdoors also leads to enhanced self-esteem, independence and feelings of responsibility, improved interpersonal skills, cooperation, and multi-disciplinary learning across subjects.

STATUS:

The CEC Inc. is run by a seven-member volunteer governance board that operates, monitors, and guides the project-based charter school, and manages the community garden located on school grounds. The school is part of the School District of Waupaca. This is CEC Inc.'s fourth year managing the garden, which has a 14-year history. Since 2018, we have developed and strengthened a variety of partnerships: Wild Ones, Tomorrow's Children, Waupaca Library, Board of Education, Living the Waupaca Way, The Arts Hub, The Hunger Network, various local farmers; and within the Waupaca County Community Garden Committee, catalyzing collaboration between community garden boards. We hope to continue to

strengthen these and develop new relationships: naturalist groups, regional charter school leaders, and Waupaca Park and Rec.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

Describe the project/program's total budget, to date-funding secured or expected, requested amount and sustainability plan to ensure project/program continues past initial funding.

TOTAL BUDGET: \$109,820

The architectural drawings of the furnished, outdoor gathering pavilion, will measure just over 1,500 square feet, with dimensions of 42 ft. x 36 ft. for a planned capacity of 60. The total cost is \$109,820; this includes architectural drawings, labor and materials, poured concrete foundation, access to potable water, canvas curtains to protect against the elements, solar panels, and flexible furniture.

- Construction Labor: \$15,820 [in-kind]
- Architectural drawings and meetings: \$5,000 [in-kind]
- Concrete Foundation: \$10,450
- Structure: \$39,550
- Canvas to Block Elements: \$45,000
- Solar Panels [phase two]: \$18,000
- Furniture: \$15,500
- Install Potable Water, 3-season: \$500

Planning began in December of 2021; a needs assessment was sent to potential Pavilion users. The architect and CEC Inc. president used the survey results and feedback on the original drawings to guide the design process. In January 2022 the CEC Inc. president met with the WHS CTE coordinator and Tech Ed teacher to discuss a partnership. The outcome: break ground in fall of 2022 for a year-long, real-world project, with CTE students providing the construction labor.