**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**24 Schools and 5 School Districts Receive Grants to Fund Health and Wellness Actions**

*Sustainable Jersey for Schools Announces Grants Funded by NJ Department of Health*

**Ewing, NJ (August 24, 2015) –** Today, Sustainable Jersey for Schools announced the twenty-four New Jersey schools and five school districts that were selected to receive a Sustainable Jersey for Schools Small Grant funded by the New Jersey Department of Health. These grants will support school and district initiatives including wellness programs, water bottle filling stations, school gardens, healthy food campaigns, physical activity clubs, yoga programs and more.

Currently, 95 districts and 269 schools have registered to work toward Sustainable Jersey for Schools certification. “These grants will support districts and schools that are registered with Sustainable Jersey for Schools as they tackle important health and wellness actions,” said Donna Drewes, who co-directs Sustainable Jersey with Randall Solomon. “This grant funding from the New Jersey Department of Health is especially important in this inaugural year of the Sustainable Jersey for Schools program as schools work to become certified for the first time.”

The New Jersey Department of Health is funding the grants through its Maternal and Child Health Services Title V Block Grant. Technical assistance to grant recipients will be provided by three of the Department of Health’s regional partners: AtlantiCare (south), EmPoWER Somerset (central) and The Center for Prevention and Counseling (north).

***SUSTAINBLE JERSEY FOR SCHOOLS $4,000 SMALL GRANTS RECIPIENTS*** *(project descriptions follow)****:***

* **5 *School District* Grant Recipients:** Mainland Regional High School District (Atlantic County), Delran Township School District (Burlington County), Glen Rock Public School District (Bergen County), Princeton Public Schools (Mercer County) and High Bridge Borough School District (Hunterdon County)
* **24 *School* Grant Recipients:** Carteret High School, Cherry Hill High-West High School, East Brunswick Vocational School, Egg Harbor City Community School, F.W. Holbein Middle School, Galloway Township Middle School, Grover Cleveland Middle School, Hampton Public School, Highland Park High School, Highland Park Middle School, Kenneth R. Olson Middle School, Long Branch Middle School, Louise A. Spencer Elementary School, Manasquan High School, Memorial High School, Middle Township Public School District, Northfield Community Middle School, Orange Avenue Elementary School, Renaissance at Rand Middle School, Rockaway Valley Elementary School, Rutherford High School, Union City High School, William Davies Middle School and WNY Middle School.

Proposals were reviewed by an independent Blue Ribbon Selection Committee. The Sustainable Jersey for Schools grants are intended to help school districts and schools make progress toward a sustainable future in general, and specifically toward Sustainable Jersey for Schools certification.

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***5 School District* Recipients of $4,000 Sustainable Jersey for Schools Project Grants** *(sorted by county)*

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| **District** | **County** | **Project Description** |
| Mainland Regional High School District | Atlantic | Develop and enhance a high intensity and dynamic training Physical Education and Wellness program for students. |
| Delran Township School District | Burlington | Identify and gather key stakeholders to be part of the School Wellness Council which will develop a plan to assess the school and community health environment and create an action plan. |
| Glen Rock Public School District | Bergen | Promote awareness of healthy lifestyles in students through education and implement healthy food policies and practices. |
| Princeton Public Schools | Mercer | Implement a district wellness challenge that will provide district-wide activities designed for all employees with the purpose of demonstrating that small steps can lead to big changes in overall health and well-being. |
| High Bridge Borough School District | Hunterdon | Expand the school district’s garden beds and add a rain barrel, compost bin and small greenhouse to keep the less hardy vegetables protected; purchase supplies to implement hydroponic gardening. |

***24 School* Recipients of $4,000 Sustainable Jersey for Schools Project Grants** *(sorted by county)*

| **School** | **District** | **County** | **Project Description** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Egg Harbor City Community School | Egg Harbor City | Atlantic | Establish and sustain a newly purchased greenhouse year round for the school giving students the ability to begin crops from seed in the greenhouse and then transfer the sprouts into the school garden. Provide the students and their families exposure to horticulture, healthy and nutritious food options and a variety of hands on learning activities. |
| Northfield Community Middle School | Northfield City | Atlantic | Implement "Stretch for Health and Wellness" physical activity program, which will lead, coordinate, and promote enduring healthy, active lifestyles using Yoga. |
| William Davies Middle School | Hamilton Township | Atlantic | Expand the school’s existing raised bed gardens; assist in funding outdoor, total body exercise stations; add 12 additional garden beds to school/community garden, which includes 6 elevated beds for handicapped or elderly gardeners. |
| Galloway Township Middle School | Galloway Township | Atlantic | Help students in science/math classes to develop revisions to current plot plan of the schools garden beds and current irrigation system; help teachers to work collaboratively on developing an expanded integration of the garden into general and special education classrooms. |
| Rutherford High School | Rutherford | Bergen | Expand the school courtyard to create a safe, protected area for faculty, staff, and students to reconnect with nature in a tranquil and natural environment, for example the School Assistance Counselor will utilize it for the school’s Insight Group. This group provides small group sessions for at risk/high need students. |
| F.W. Holbein Middle School | Mount Holly | Burlington | Implement a morning fitness club for grades 6-8 to promote physical activity, cultivate habits for an active lifestyle, and educate both the mind and the body. |
| Kenneth R. Olson Middle School | Tabernacle Township | Burlington | Develop and implement the school’s “Morning Jump Start!” program, which will provide approximately 15-20 minutes of structured physical activity prior to the beginning of the school day, three days per week. |
| Cherry Hill High-West High School | Cherry Hill | Camden | Build a raised-bed garden and rainwater harvesting system. The garden will be used to teach special education students gardening, food prep and other life skills, and to promote fitness, healthy living and healthy food choices. |
| Middle Township #4 Middle School | Middle Township | Cape May | Develop and implement a Healthy Food Unit and Wellness Club, which will offer different types of fitness each week, healthy cooking activities, guest speakers, and healthy snacks. |
| Renaissance at Rand Middle School | Montclair | Essex | Upgrade the school’s water fountains to water bottle filling stations with the intention of promoting a healthy beverage choice for the students, and encourage them to bring reusable water bottles with them to school every day. |
| Grover Cleveland Middle School | Caldwell-West Caldwell | Essex | Initiate an updated physical education and wellness center program for students in grades 6-8, as well as all faculty and staff. |
| Louise A. Spencer Elementary School | Newark | Essex | Establish a garden that offers free produce and spices to members of the school and community. |
| Union City High School | Union City | Hudson | Educate and increase knowledge of health and wellbeing by providing workshops, mentoring, community service learning, and additional exposure to physical activity opportunities. |
| Memorial High School | West New York | Hudson | Reinvigorate the School Wellness teams with a training retreat; complete a school health assessment using a diverse team, develop an action plan and track progress. |
| WNY Middle School | West New York | Hudson | Reinvigorate the School Wellness teams with a training retreat; complete a school health assessment using a diverse team, develop an action plan and track progress. |
| Hampton Public School | Hampton Borough | Hunterdon | Implement a Wake Up Walking Club that encourages and facilitates students getting physical exercise before the start of the school day by providing designated, chaperoned walks around the school property. |
| Highland Park High School | Highland Park | Middlesex | Install two water bottle filling stations in the school where conventional water fountains currently reside; purchase reusable water bottles to distribute to the students and faculty. |
| Highland Park Middle School | Highland Park | Middlesex | Install one filtered bottle refilling station in the school; purchase 75 water bottles/25 per grade to be raffled off to students who have completed sustainable actions within the school. |
| East Brunswick Vocational School | Middlesex County Vocational and Technical | Middlesex | Educate the students on making healthy food choices in health and physical education classes, increase staff wellness with a pedometer campaign and increase the size of the school garden by adding an interior garden. |
| Carteret High School | Carteret Public | Middlesex | Create a ten-week yoga program; yoga sessions will be accompanied by mindfulness training exercises. |
| Long Branch Middle School | Long Branch | Monmouth | Create the "Fitness Fever, Catch It" program—a comprehensive physical fitness program, which will address meeting and improving upon all NJ Core Content Standards. |
| Manasquan High School | Manasquan | Monmouth | Create and support a school garden project. |
| Rockaway Valley Elementary School | Boonton Township | Morris | Implement a climate and culture initiative to create a safe and positive place for students to learn and thrive. The three-year process includes a series of professional development and staff development exercises and assessments. |
| Orange Ave. Elementary School | Cranford | Union | Add three after-school clubs for students in grades 6, 7 and 8. All three clubs will focus on co-ed active recreation in a noncompetitive setting. |

***About Sustainable Jersey for Schools***

Sustainable Jersey for Schools is a certification program for public schools in New Jersey. Launched in October 2014, Sustainable Jersey for Schools is a program of Sustainable Jersey, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that provides tools, training and financial incentives to support and reward schools as they pursue sustainability programs. The process is one hundred percent voluntary and each school can choose whether it wants to get certified and the actions it wants to do in order to achieve enough points to get certified.

Sustainable Jersey for Schools is underwritten by the New Jersey School Boards Association, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) Clean Energy Program and the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA). Small Grants for Sustainable Jersey for Schools are underwritten by the PSEG Foundation, New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) and the New Jersey Department of Health. The Founding Sponsors are South Jersey Gas, New Jersey Natural Gas and NJM Insurance Group. The program supporters are the Foundation for Educational Administration and the Bayer Foundation.

Program partners include: New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA), New Jersey Association of School Business Officials (NJASBO), New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), New Jersey Parent Teacher Association (NJPTA), New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA), New Jersey School Buildings and Grounds Association (NJSBGA) and The Sustainability Institute at The College of New Jersey.

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