SEEDS After School program coming to Benzie Academy and Fife Lake Elementary

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TRAVERSE CITY — The SEEDS After School program is expanding into two new sites this fall, which will increase its number of after school sites in the region from five to seven. Funded by a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant through the Michigan Department of Education, SEEDS will begin daily after school programs at Benzie Academy and Fife Lake Elementary.

“Having been here when Benzie County schools had SEEDS After School many years ago, I look forward to re-establishing this wonderful partnership,” said Dave Clasen, principal of Benzie High School. “The SEEDS community comes with many dedicated people that help support the whole student body with academic support, after school activities, and networking for students looking for employment.”

The SEEDS program at Benzie Academy will be geared toward high school students, providing career exploration and training in an after school setting and leveraging the SEEDS’ expertise in job training for youth in the SEEDS Youth Conservation Corps program.

SEEDS After School Program Manager, Tara Ward commented, “Due to proximity, the Fife Lake Elementary program will be working closely with our current Forest Area Middle School program to provide continuous enrichment programming for students in the district. We are excited to continue exploring multi-age peer-to-peer engagement opportunities.”

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Benzie Academy and Fife Lake Elementary are joining five other schools in the region with SEEDS After School programs funded by 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants: Floyd M. Jewett (Mesick) Elementary, Rapid City Elementary, Kaleva Norman Dickson Elementary, Brethren Middle School and Forest Area Middle School.

SEEDS After School was launched in 2009 with funding from the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants. These grants allow SEEDS to provide free programming for the entire partner school community, four days a week during the school year and six weeks during the summer. Participating students receive a meal, a supportive learning environment, and diverse enrichment activities that complement and add value to what they are learning during their school day.

Throughout the 2017-2018 school year, SEEDS staff provided over 50,000 student contact hours. Over 22,500 of those hours were dedicated to academics and to STEAM activities (Science-Technology-Art-Engineering-Mathematics). SEEDS programs served over 400 unique students, averaging 130 students every single day. For more information, contact SEEDS at hello@ecoseeds.org or 231-947-0312.