



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Ulster County

232 Plaza Road
Kingston, NY 12401
Phone 845.340.3990
Fax 845.340.3993
<http://ulster.cce.cornell.edu>

Ulster County Economic Development Alliance
P.O. Box 1800
244 Fair Street
Kingston, NY 12402-1800

Jan 2nd 2018

Dear Ulster County Economic Development Alliance:

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County 4-H would like to request funding to help fulfill the Ellenville Million's goal of helping the people and the economy of the Ellenville and Wawarsing area to prosper. The impact of youth STEM mentoring programs can be evidenced by statistics and anecdotes from beneficiaries found below about the impact of this program on their STEM content knowledge, education and career choices, skills, and impact on the community- Violet's is particularly relevant! Our program goals dovetail with components 1 and 8 of the Ellenville Million, as we are preparing a knowledgeable local workforce to fill new technological jobs in the region, especially as access to high speed internet improves. This program began 3 years ago in Ellenville with middle school students and many are just now approaching an employable age. Our program develops both hard and soft skills required for future job training, and making a highly desirable and employable local workforce. Since the collapse of Big Brothers Big Sisters in 2011 in Ulster County it is the only formal mentoring program of which we are aware.

Program Background and Statistics

Since beginning our mentoring programs 4 years ago we have reached 125 or so youth regularly in Kingston and Ellenville. The mentoring programs were funded through a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to National 4-H Council, and delivered in 48 states nationwide with a target audience of underrepresented audiences in STEM career fields including girls and youth of color. CCEUC 4-H received amounts ranging from \$36,000/yr (40 youth) to \$46,000/yr at its apex to serve 60 youth. In mid-October we were informed of a massive cut in federal funds and the vast majority of national sites would not receive the renewed funding we expected to start receiving on November 1st. In Ellenville we have served 35 youth in the 3 years of programming, which speaks to the amount of time youth spend with the program. In fact 9 of our 19 currently active youth have been with the program **since its inception** in Ellenville. This is unheard of, especially as many of these youth have moved from middle school to high school and still attend our weekly programming; many were looking forward to becoming Mentors themselves. 52% of our Ellenville participants have been female and 46% identify as youth of color (Black, Latino or Asian American). We aim to provide a 4:1 Mentee to Mentor ratio and are also recruiting for new Mentors if anyone is interested!

We surveyed respondents at our last official Tech Wizards meeting on Dec 20th to garner some information that might be helpful to the Ellenville Million. Of the 16 respondents at the meeting below is some of the data worth noting:

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Content Knowledge- From the 16 respondents, 15 reported increased content knowledge both in Science and Technology. Other notable areas of increased content knowledge were 3-D Printing (14 respondents), Food Science (11) Robotics (10), Engineering (9) and Physics (8).

Education- 15 respondents reported better grades in either Science or Math. 8 reported more interest in science, and 6 more interest in math.

Skills- 13 respondents reported improved skills in teamwork, 11 in public speaking, 5 in community service and 4 in college readiness.

Program Impact on Educational and Career choices: 12 of the 16 respondents reported that this program had impacted their educational and/or career choices. Some excerpted quotes below:

“It has changed my educational choices. I decided to stay in programming and I.T.”- Julia

“...it boosted my grades in science”- Meghan

“I have seen engineering as a cool thing; now I see it as something I really want to do”- Bryan

“It’s opened up my array of career choices in the future”- Izaiah

How Tech Wizards has helped you or the community you live in- All 16 reported a positive impact of this program. Some excerpted responses below:

“It helps because kids are getting smarter and the smarter the population the better the village”- Violet

“Tech Wizards brings a group of kids who normally wouldn’t interact together at our community library” Jodi, parent of Tech Wizard

“It helped the Ellenville students who run the streets not running the streets and instead occupied” - Charles

“It’s helped many kids not inspired to do more and learn”- Julia

We are requesting funding in the amount of \$10,000 which will allow us to resume weekly programming through June for up to 30 mentees in Ellenville. Due to the unexpected and sudden lack of notice about funding renewal, we haven’t had many options to seek alternative funding; this one-time funding request gives us the opportunity to continue services to our participants without interruption. In addition we are running a crowd-funding campaign (gofundme.com/saveulstermentoring) with the growing local tech community as a target, and one of our Mentors spoke at a recent Hudson Valley Tech Meet-Up to encourage donations. The campaign has had limited success at \$1,325, allowing us to meet twice in January in both Kingston and Ellenville, but is unlikely to sustain programming much longer. Funding us through June gives us the much-needed time to identify other grants and potential funders and petition OJJDP for a restoration of funds without interrupting programming for a program we have worked very hard to build, and from which our participants so clearly benefit.

Thank you for your time in reading this request! Please let us know if you have any additional questions.

Melanie

Melanie Forstrom

4-H Youth Development Program Leader

Cornell Cooperative Extension Ulster County

232 Plaza Rd
Kingston, NY 12401
maf357@cornell.edu
(o): 845-340-3990 x341