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For Immediate Release:

March 31, 2021

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Monroe County 4-H Program Receives Earth Day Grant

Grant awarded to increase environmental awareness

The Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County (CCE-Monroe) 4-H Program has been awarded a grant by the Genesee Finger Lakes Chapter of the Air & Waste Management Association (GFLAWMA) in honor of Earth Day 2021. The purpose of the Earth Day Grant is to increase and enhance environmental education opportunities in our community through projects that promote environmental awareness, development of technical skills, and sustainable environmental practices. The grant program is open to educational institutions and not-for-profit organizations in the New York State counties of Monroe, Wayne, Ontario, Livingston, Orleans, Genesee, Wyoming, Steuben, Seneca, Schuyler, Yates, and Allegany.

The Monroe County 4-H team will create environmental education take-home kits. Kits will focus on concepts of environmental awareness and sustainable environmental practices centered on water pollution and water protection. Take-home kits will allow youth to learn and engage away from a screen and without the need for internet access or in-person gatherings due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Take-home kits will be available to youth serving organizations throughout Monroe County from Earth Day, April 22nd, until the end of May. Each kit will contain the book *We Are the Water Protectors*, an award winning picture book that issues a rallying cry to safeguard the Earth's water from pollution and corruption, an environmental intentions journal with prompts to influence long-term environmental stewardship, a Water Protectors Pledge, and two hands-on educational activities. The project will teach youth the importance of protecting the water supply, and adopting long-term practices that will protect the environment.

The environmental awareness take-home kits seek to increase environmental awareness and consciousness through literary exposure and hands-on learning experiences. Youth will receive a book that can be added to their home library which influences questions and curiosity related to environmental issues. The kit will also contain all of the materials needed to complete two hands-on activities which will teach youth about water pollution and environmental issues.

The Environmental Awareness Take-Home kits also aim to increase technical knowledge, skills, and sustainable environmental practices. Monroe County Youth will learn skills related to

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agricultural science and pollution, the short and long-term impact of water pollution, and the difficulties of removing pollutants from the water supply. They will develop problem solving skills through the creation of an invention with the purpose of solving an environmental issue.

Are you a local organization interested in receiving environmental awareness kits for youth you serve? Contact Destiny Draggett at dpd66@cornell.edu for kit availability.

The Monroe County 4-H Program is offered through Cornell Cooperative Extension to the youth of Monroe County. 4-H is a worldwide youth development program open to all youth aged 5-to-19, who want to have fun, learn new skills, and explore the world. In return, youth who participate in 4-H find a supportive environment and opportunities for hands-on or "experiential" learning about things that interest them.

Learn more about 4-H at <http://monroe.cce.cornell.edu/4-h-youth-development>.

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