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To Whom it may Concern:

As a high school science educator in mid-coast Maine, I could not offer my students full exposure to hands-on engaging experiences without the resources of key community partners. The budgetary reality that confines many science curriculums to the classroom is alive in our region and it is becoming more severe as this school year progresses. The Cathance River Education Alliance (CREA) has been my single most important community partner since I began teaching in this region. CREA offers opportunities for my students to use industry-standard equipment in a unique preserved environment that is safe and exciting for all of my students.

Three years ago I began an Advanced Placement Environmental Science course at Morse with minimal financial support from Bath Public Schools. When faced with the requirement to have these students conduct hands-on field work for several units, I was at a loss of how to transport, equip, fund and facilitate such work. I approached several environmental organizations and placements for support in this endeavor and found no place that could provide such experiences within my financial constraints. Rick Wilson and CREA offered their full support of my students and provided an environment where my students could conduct meaningful field work, which was regarded by many students as their favorite and most worthwhile component of the course.

Over the past few years I have returned to CREA with my Environmental Science students to continue our chemical, biological and physical aquatic sampling. CREA has provided sampling equipment and chemical kits that have made our field work possible. We have continued this sampling on nearby Nequasset Lake, which is Bath's drinking water source. This service-learning project is engaging students in authentic science that is benefitting our community.

Hearing rave-reviews of my work with CREA, some of my colleagues have also connected with CREA to conduct field work in Geology, Biology and Vertebrate Zoology courses, further enriching the curriculum of the Morse High School Science Department. Approximately 80-100 students have had the opportunity to conduct field work at CREA.

I thank CREA, Executive Director Rick Wilson and CREA's supporters for offering such an enriching opportunity for the students of mid-coast Maine. We are truly lucky to have such a valuable resource in our community. My students would have an inferior science education if it were not for CREA's support.

Sincerely,



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