

July 2, 2019

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer
Governor
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Governor Whitmer,

I would like to personally thank you and share with you that we are truly grateful for the support we received through West Michigan Works! and the Going Pro Talent Fund for a project management course and for welding training for our employees. Both of these opportunities provided very practical training that we are already putting to good use!

Pierce Cedar Creek Institute is a non-profit environmental education center located in Barry County, and our mission to inspire the appreciation and stewardship of our environment is something we focus on daily and work toward efficient and effective operations to utilize resources wisely. I was very excited to learn from Craig Stolsonburg, our West Michigan Works! business solutions representative, about the Going Pro grant and that this year it was open to nonprofits. He made the grant process very manageable!

Regarding the project management training we received, the training was held at the Institute on March 28, 29, and April 11 and presented by Susan Ostrum of Davenport University's Institute for Professional Excellence (IPEX). The grant funded seven employees, but we included three additional employees, and the course was held onsite at the Institute. IPEX staff worked with us to tailor the training to our needs. Having 10 of our 17 employees training in project management was a huge benefit and allowed us to design a system specifically for our use at the Institute. I've included the form, which outlines the process we developed as a result of this course. Since so much of what we do here, from classroom education and community programs, to land management work and facilities support, really is "project management" this training helped us develop a tool or system that will help us work more effectively and efficiently. This is something that I don't think we could have accomplished by sending one employee to a training course, asking them to bring back what they learned.

I've already used what I learned in this training while working with a community member on the possibility of developing a recycling program for elementary students. It has helped us clarify our goals, develop a roadmap for our work, and also it has helped us make sure we are both on the same page. I know our project management system will be "tweaked" with use, but I am very exciting about coming out of this training with a practical, useful tool.

The Kellogg Community College welding course for Tadd Wattles was also very beneficial. Tadd is our facilities manager, responsible for overseeing the maintenance of our visitor center, education building, four housing units, our maintenance building, and our equipment. Tadd is



now able to utilize the welding equipment in our new maintenance building because of this training.

As Tadd shared, "I am so thankful to have been able to take the welding class at Kellogg Community College. They have a great program and an excellent facility. The instructors were all very helpful to someone with little welding knowledge and experience. We have a welding machine at work and I know a little about welding, but the class gave me more confidence and a lot more practice so that I now feel very comfortable in taking on the different welding projects that I have at work."

I am including a picture of a used flail mower we were able to purchase for \$500, knowing that Tadd was taking a welding course and could make the repairs needed.

Training is so important to operations, whether you are a for-profit or non-profit organization. I am grateful to have a partner such as West Michigan Works! in our community. Thank you for making this training possible. We are truly making the most of it!

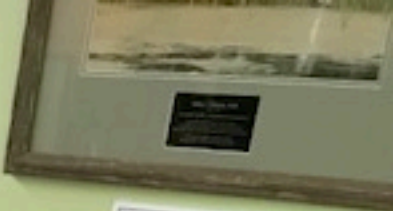
Sincerely,



Michelle Skedgell
Executive Director



With a mission to inspire
appreciation and stewardship
of our environment.



NOTICE

NOTICE



A man in a green t-shirt and khaki pants stands next to a vintage John Deere roller on a paved driveway.

JOHN DEERE

